

A PLAN
OF THE ENTRANCE OF CHESAPEAKE BAY,
with JAMES and YORK RIVERS.

As it is shown the Respective Nations in the beginning of October
of the last year Commanded by Lord POWNALL,
Admiral of the Fleet and Lord of the Admiralty,
of the American and French Forces under General Washington,
and of the French Fleet under Count de Grasse.

By an Officer

Scale of Miles

LONDON

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BOOKS BY
STEPHEN BONSAI

When the French Were Here

Unfinished Business

Heyday in a Vanished World

The American Mediterranean

The Golden Horse Shoe

The Fight for Santiago

The Real Condition of Cuba

Morocco As It Is



COUNT de ROCHAMBEAU
MARSHAL OF FRANCE
1725-1807

WHEN THE FRENCH WERE HERE

A NARRATIVE *of the* SOJOURN *of the* FRENCH
FORCES *in* AMERICA, *and Their* CONTRIBUTION
to the YORKTOWN CAMPAIGN

Drawn from Unpublished Reports and
Letters of Participants in the National Archives
of France and the MS. Division of the
Library of Congress

by
STEPHEN BONSAL



DOUBLEDAY, DORAN AND COMPANY, INC.

Garden City, New York

1945

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES
AT
THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

We have been contemporaries and fellow laborers in the cause of liberty, and we have lived together as brothers should do in harmonious friendship.—*Washington to Rochambeau* · MOUNT VERNON · *Feb. 1st, 1784*

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Introduction

THIS EXCURSION into a little-traveled field of American history, a chronicle of incidents that took place on the American front during the great world war of the eighteenth century, has historical value and at least a charm of association which has a peculiar significance at the present time.

In 1922, when M. Clemenceau, the fighting Premier of France, made his second visit to America, after an absence of fifty years, I had the honor and pleasure of escorting him on his tour. At one halt in our journey, from a great railway bridge of steel, "straining our eyes a little," as the Tiger of France admitted, we saw the ford of the Susquehanna through which the French troops plunged on their hurried march South to complete the investment of Yorktown. At another village in Maryland we heard on the breeze ("such wonderful ears we had!" said the Tiger) the magic words of Trench Tilghman "A horse for the Congress! Cornwallis is taken!"

The great Frenchman was immensely interested in the itinerary of the French troops, and, though he courteously sought to conceal it, was not a little chagrined to learn that the great march of Rochambeau's men from Narragansett Bay to the capes of Virginia was practically unmarked, and the camp sites of the expeditionary force almost universally forgotten. Then and there we entered into a pact.

"This is a peace pact," insisted the Tiger of France, "not a war instrument; it is to be kept." It was to the effect that at the first opportune moment we would follow in the footsteps of the indispen-

sable French "auxiliaries." We would follow their trail through Providence and Hartford, around the suburbs of New York, through Trenton and Chester, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Annapolis. In the midst of these great cities of today we would endeavor to visualize the straggling settlements out of which would emerge, as Washington pointed out to his friend, the French general, Chevalier de Chastellux, "the rising empire of America."

Of course there would be a difference. We would ride in motors where they went on foot, many of them at least. Colonel and great feudal lord as he was, de Noailles claims that he went all the way to the Chesapeake on foot. It would be different, but still from the skyscraping bridges we could look down upon the treacherous fords with which our French friends were confronted.

The project was frequently postponed, but it was not given up. First there was Demosthenes, who had to be vindicated, and when that remarkable work was finished there were many other demands upon the time and strength of the octogenarian statesman. At intervals, with the aid of the rare volume of Count de Deux-Ponts's American campaign and a transcript of Baron de Closen's MS. diary, both officers of the French contingent in the Yorktown campaign, our route was studied and mapped out. Early in the spring of 1928 a cable came, warning us to prepare for the excursion upon which M. Clemenceau had set his heart. Everything was ready, and the route was plotted, thanks to the Rochambeau portfolio in the Library of Congress, and the forty-five camps of the French Five Thousand had been identified. A devoted friend of the great Frenchman, James Stuart Douglas of Arizona, was in Paris to escort the veteran of so many wars, political and civil, as well as military, back to the land of which he had such vivid memories of experiences and vicissitudes suffered in his amazing youth and heyday. And, though he chided us at times for our manifold shortcomings, he loved our people better than any other save only his very own. "And why? Why is it so?" he would ask himself. Then he would answer with a merry twinkle of the eye, "Because you are so very young and amusing," and then seriously, very seriously, "and because when we were within two fingers of disaster you came and saved my gray hairs from knowing defeat and disaster."

The cable announcing the sailing date was hourly expected; we

were all on the tiptoe of excitement, when an attack of bronchitis, aggravated by the bullet¹ in his chest, a "souvenir of the Peace Conference," as the Tiger had called it in jest, made the trip inadvisable, but only for the moment.

From time to time, as the opportunity presented, we continued to study the itinerary of the historic march. M. Clemenceau was most particularly amused with a passage in the diary of Baron de Closen, warning those who read it not to count on his travel notes as an infallible guide. He remarked that everything changes very quickly in America and that to find your way about was most perplexing. "Most of the halting places were merely taverns," he wrote, "and the tavern keeper gives his name to the settlement or ferry near by, if there is one; and when Innkeeper Jones moves away and Smith moves in, then Jonestown becomes Smithtown, and it is all very confusing."

"What do you think Baron de Closen would say of the Biltmore or the Waldorf-Astoria?" and the Tiger would roar with amusement.

Another sailing date was never set. "Someday I will embark in an airship," he would say. "I will start so suddenly that all my aches and pains will be left behind. Albert has an old kit bag up in the attic in which he can pack them away quite comfortably."

It was in September 1929, six weeks before his death, that I saw the great Frenchman for the last time. He admitted that he thought it quite unlikely that he would ever make the journey with me in the flesh, but "I will be with you in spirit," he said again and again, "and the French soldiers of the American Revolution will march with you along the forgotten trail which led to Yorktown and victory."

With such an inspiration and in such noble company, I trust the story of what happened will not prove unworthy of that great episode in the joint history of two liberty-loving peoples.

STEPHEN BONSAI.

¹Coltin's bullet.

Prologue

THE PURPOSE of this prologue is not only to present our War for Independence in its proper relation to the world war of the eighteenth century, but to indicate what a vital factor it has become in the protracted and universal struggle against the forces of darkness and savagery which the United Nations are now happily bringing to a victorious issue.

The bullet that was fired at Lexington brought down the tyrannical German King at Yorktown five years later, and Jefferson's appeal (July 4, 1776) to a candid world against his usurpations was at long last ratified by the British Parliament on November 24, 1931, by the unanimous vote of men who sat in the same hall where Burke and Fox had offered their creed of freedom to men who were blind to their vision of things to come. On this bright day Parliament declared that "the Dominions were autonomous communities, that every self-governing member of the British Commonwealth was master of its destiny—subject to no more compulsion whatever." That was a proud day for all men of British blood when a few hours after the new and greater Charter had been proclaimed, the Commons expunged the old tyrannical laws—long it is true fallen into desuetude—and amid applause (in which the shades of Burke and Fox must have joined) declared that "No act of the British Parliament thereafter passed shall extend to a Dominion unless the Dominion itself has requested and consented to the enactment."

On that day the free peoples had raised a standard around which forward-looking men of all races and creeds could rally. Indeed it

was none too soon. Almost too late, in fact, for only eight years were to pass before the world of free men pressing toward the light was subjected to a sudden, savage, and cunningly prepared attack from those who sought to destroy the achievements of human progress and to banish from our midst all vestiges of civilized life. So secretly had the attack been planned, so incredulous were our people, that for long and anxious months the outcome of the struggle hung in the balance.

When the chosen representatives of the chastened peoples assemble to bind up their gaping wounds and to rebuild the world which has been all but destroyed, it is fervently to be hoped that they will be guided by the precepts of wisdom, our beacon lights in ages past, which failed only because they did not achieve general acceptance. It was humanity that failed at the Conference of Paris, as General Smuts has so well said, and not the precepts that were proclaimed there and so little heeded. Now the world is vouchsafed another chance to save our civilization, and surely failure this time means a return to the caves from whence we came.

As we face the difficult days ahead it may be helpful and heartening to look back at the path we have traveled and view the obstacles we have surmounted. Those hardy and courageous people who came across the Atlantic to escape European wars were grievously disappointed. Hostilities leaped the ocean barrier, and soon the refuge of the peace-loving became a bone of contention between the covetous war lords of the old world. In the history books and the military chronicles, which it must be confessed did not reach the colonies in any great numbers, these campaigns were classified as the War of the Spanish Succession, King William's War, and the French and Indian War. Gradually the colonists who were often involved but little interested got into the habit of describing all these campaigns as "King George's Wars," and there was a thought behind this descriptive title which should have been disturbing to the high-and-mighty ministers in London—but apparently was not.

It was not long before discordant notes crept into the relations between the colonists and their kinsmen who stayed at home. Entries in the diary of that wise observer, John Evelyn, are not the first indication of this natural but regrettable development, but they are certainly most revealing. Describing the proceedings of the Council

on Trade and Plantations, of which he was a member, he wrote under date of May 26, 1671 :

"The first thing we did was to settle the form of a circular letter to the Governors of all His Majesty's Plantations and Territories in the West Indies and islands thereof, to give them notice to whom they should apply themselves on all occasions, and to render us an account of their present State and Government, but what we most insisted on was to know the condition of New England, which appear to be very independent as to their regard to Old England or his Majesty, rich and strong as they now were.

"There were great debates in what shape to write to them; for the condition of that colony was such that they were able to contest with all other Plantations about them, and there was fear of their breaking from all dependence on this Nation. . . .

"Some of our Council were for sending them a menacing letter, which those who better understood the peevish and touchy humour of that Colony were utterly against."

Again, on June 6 (ten days later), Evelyn wrote:

"I went to Council where was produced a most exact and ample information of the State of Jamaica and of the best expedients as to New England, on which there was a long debate; but at length it was concluded that if any, it should be a conciliating paper at first, or civil letter, till we had better information of the present face of things, since we understood they were a people almost upon the very brink of renouncing any dependence on the Crown."

It would be extremely misleading if I should allow the impression to be conveyed that the borough-mongers, the placemen, and even the fox-hunting squires who regarded the American colonists as goods and chattels and the plantations across the seas as markets to be exploited, voiced the unanimous thought of England. Indeed the opposite view was often expressed by Englishmen long before Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox were born, and by no one more eloquently than by George Montagu, the first Lord Halifax, a very powerful figure during the reign of Charles II. In the sixteen eighties he urged repeatedly that a new and more liberal constitution be given the New England colonies, and in November 1684 the placemen in Parliament could not silence him when he said:

"There could be no doubt whatsoever but that the same laws

which are in force in England should also be established in a country inhabited by Englishmen and that an absolute government is neither so happy nor so safe as that which is tempered by laws and which sets bounds to the authority of the Prince."

As for himself, he declared "He could not live under a King who should have it in his power whenever he thought proper to take the money he has in his pocket." Lord Halifax was shouted down in Parliament, but his words were favorably received in the plantations and also in England, where the leaven of the Magna Charta was working slowly but was far from dead.

Domestic grievances grew apace, and the loyal North Americans as a general thing showed anything but enthusiasm for the wars in which they were drafted. Indeed in records that are undoubtedly authentic it is frequently stated that some of the so-called "volunteers" were brought to the recruiting stations bound hand and foot, and there are not infrequent references to constables who were fined for allowing the "volunteers" to escape!

The expedition to "sing the King of Spain's beard" and, in the first instance, to capture Cartagena, the great fortress that had cost Philip II so many million ducats, proved to be the most disastrous of all these forays. Of the five thousand colonists who sailed upon the expedition only three hundred returned to their native land. In the Massachusetts records it is chronicled that of the five hundred men of the Bay colony who went out only fifty came back and they were so crippled that all of them were a charge on the communities in which they lived for the rest of their lives.

So few of these men came back to their homes that the American contingent of Admiral Vernon's force, when mentioned at all, is always spoken of as the "lost brigade," and their deeds and their sufferings would have escaped history altogether but for the fact that one Tobias Smollett, later to become a great novelist and historian, was serving on the flagship *Boyne* in the humble capacity of surgeon's mate. He saw our colonial cannon fodder afloat and ashore, in battle, and in the fever hospitals which were soon overcrowded. In his story *Roderick Random* he tells what he saw.

Parliament had ample warning of the gathering storm, but the fox-hunting squires paid little heed. The colonists hated "King George's Wars" and didn't want to pay for them in blood and treasure.

Woodrow Wilson as a historian correctly interpreted their feelings when he said: "What English armies did in America was part of England's struggle for Empire, for a leading station in power and riches in the world, and England should pay for it." And it was unwise of the people at home to ignore the warning of Governor Spotswood, who had lived in Virginia thirty years and knew the temper of the people. Out of his full knowledge the old soldier wrote, "If the Ministry should direct moneys to be paid by Act of Parliament they would find it no easy matter to put such an Act into execution."

Of course the so-called French and Indian War with which the colonists were brought into such rude contact was not merely an American war; it was a part of the far-flung Seven Years' War which upset the balance of power in Europe, brought India into England's widening dominion on one side of the world and increases of territory in America on the other. The Cartagena and the Havana forays were not pleasant memories to the colonial rank and file. But it was the Louisbourg fiasco that decided the colonists that they wanted no more of foreign wars even when fought on their own continent. In April 1745 four thousand men from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut besieged the famous fortress on Cape Breton Island, and in June that stronghold, with the support of the British fleet, was captured by the "loyal North Americans." William Pepperell who led them was rewarded with a baronetcy, but if other awards were made they have escaped history. But the worst was yet to come. Three years later, by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the fortress was restored to France, and all other conquests that had been gained by American arms were canceled. The treaty was inspired by European conditions and considerations, and the "loyal North Americans" who had furnished the cannon fodder were not even consulted.

The German King did not appreciate what was happening in an awakening world, and many a true-born Englishman was quite as blind as he to the course of events across the Western Ocean which were taking such a tragic turn. Unlike Burke, the King thought he could issue and enforce an indictment against a whole nation, and he scoffed at Camden, the great lord chancellor, who said that taxation without representation was not only illegal but un-British, and

who preferred to hand over to the time-serving Ministry the seals of his high office rather than cancel that decision which is still the cornerstone of freedom and the anchor chain of liberty in the English-speaking world.

Many hamlets in the colonies that have grown into great cities were given Camden's honored name. Many other Englishmen were deservedly honored in this way, but, while admittedly men of light and leading, they were few in number, and Burke, as usual, was right when he said to members in Parliament from the rotten boroughs "that a remarkable robbery at Hounslow Heath would make more conversation than the disturbances in America."

Even after battles had been fought, towns reduced to ashes, and much blood shed, Admiral Howe invited the Americans to a feast of reconciliation on Staten Island September 11, 1776, and many, many men in England, as well as in America, prayed that the doves of peace would attend and take control of the proceedings. Howe certainly did the very best he could for his Whig patrons and his distinguished American friends. He spread before their astonished eyes some well-cured hams and bottles of sound claret to which John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Mr. Rutledge had long been strangers, and he spoke them fair and his words were full of promise. But this fairly reasonable attitude was taken and the words of understanding that accompanied it were spoken too late. The long-neglected situation was past mending except by an appeal to arms. No one explains the horns of the dilemma that was presented to the peace talkers so pointedly as does Mr. Lecky, the English historian, when he says: "The conduct of England in hiring German mercenaries to subdue the essentially English populations beyond the Atlantic made reconciliation hopeless and the Declaration of Independence inevitable." These were true words indeed, and while the peace talkers parted with expressions of personal esteem they were equally determined to slog it out, and it is only fair to admit that on the Atlantic littoral our invading cousins, pitted against the poorly equipped Colonials, as yet standing alone, met with successes which eluded their generals and their admirals in every other zone of combat.

No one saw the great transformation that was to come, that had come, so clearly as did Edmund Burke, the orator, in this instance a prophet. The colonies had grown up and Burke saw it more clearly

than anyone else, more clearly indeed than thousands of Americans, when he said :

"But nothing in progression can rest on its original plan. We may as well think of rocking a grown man in the cradle of an infant. . . . As the Colonies prospered and increased to a numerous and mighty people, spreading over a very great tract of the globe, it was natural that they should attribute to assemblies, so respectable in their formal constitution, some part of the dignity of the great nations which they represented. They made acts of all sorts and in all cases whatsoever. They levied money upon regular grants to the Crown, following all the rules and principles of a parliament to which they approached every day more nearly. Things could not be otherwise [concluded Burke]. English Colonies must be had on these terms or not at all."

These words of a great seer fittingly introduce this episode of the world war of the eighteenth century, the successful campaign by which, with the indispensable aid of the French "auxiliaries," we achieved our independence, brought freedom to Englishmen at home as well as in America, and prepared the way for the French Revolution with all its consequences throughout Europe. And these words are the charter of the overseas dominions of the British Commonwealth and our other Allies of the United Nations who, facing the hordes of savagery and oppression, are meeting with gallantry and success the most searching test to which democracy has ever been subjected.

WHEN THE FRENCH WERE HERE

The Coming of the French

IN THE SPRING OF 1780 the French expeditionary forces, drawn from all the fair lands of France, began to assemble in the villages around Brest, and, as these soldiers came equipped only with wooden *sabots*, they were more nearly submerged by the March flood of mud than were the American troops in 1918, who brought with them the Yankee device of duck-slatted boardwalks which sank, it is true, but not out of sight.

Great as were the delays in assembling the long-promised, long-expected force ("the soldiers of Dr. Franklin," as Voltaire called them), they were, through no fault of their own, still slower in embarking. In the archives of the French Ministry of War there still survives a bundle of yellow parchment papers weighing about twenty pounds, which tells why this was so, perhaps why it had to be so. I shall content myself, by way of explanation, with the rather neat remark of M. de Choiseul, the retiring Minister, who wrote as an explanatory report on the gentleman who was largely responsible for these operations: "The watch of M. de Sartine is always slow."

When the first troops reached the seashore there were no transports visible, and when they came they were few and mere cockleshells. It was soon everybody's secret that the expeditionary force would have to be divided, and then the rush began. Everyone wanted to go with the first contingent. Perhaps they all had an intuitive knowledge that no other would cross the Atlantic, and that those who remained behind would be sent to Senegal or have their

organizations frittered away in secondary operations in less interesting quarters.

Of course, as Chief Commissary Blanchard wrote in his journal, "No one but Rochambeau knew the precise destination of the fleet and convoy." Those nearest to the sources of information were confident they were being sent to the West Indies to free Jamaica from the British yoke. At all events they were going to America, and that was high—the highest adventure. Everyone tried to slip on board, and M. de Rochambeau could have filled all the vessels with volunteers had the shipping of the seven seas been at his disposal.

While Rochambeau was suffering from a bad attack of *rheumatisme inflammatoire* and was disgusted at the fact that the long-planned invasion of England on which he had worked for so many months had been definitely abandoned, he was delighted when the King saw fit to honor him with the command of the American expedition. All thought of going to his estate in Vendôme and planting cabbages and leading the life of a country gentleman after nearly twoscore years of hard campaigning was instantly abandoned. When asked by the War Minister what pay he would expect, he answered for himself and for the staff he was gathering around him, "We should like to be able to go to this war at our own expense." But the Minister arranged the pay tables on quite a handsome scale.

Only once did the general grumble, and that was when Admiral de Ternay explained to him that there was absolutely no place where his two war horses could be stowed away; so with tears in his eyes Rochambeau sent them back to his estate. One of the general's orders, all the more remarkable because he had never taken even a subordinate part in an overseas expedition, should be incorporated in the creed of all quartermasters and, indeed, of all men having to do with the loading of ships. "See to it," he wrote from Paris, "that all articles of the same kind be not placed on the same ship—so that in case of mishap the whole supply will not be lost."

Of course the general was bedeviled by all the promising young men in France, and by the friends of a great many who were not. As a general thing he put them off with promises of places in the Second Division. Even some of those who had special permission and orders from the Minister had to be sent back. The general was quite hard-boiled, but he was sorry about the Berthiers, one of whom was

later to become Napoleon's chief of staff, a marshal of France, and Prince of Wagram. Writing to the War Minister, Rochambeau said: "They brought your letters and those of M. de Sartine. They came on board as we were passing the breakwater. They came in vest and breeches of linen and wanted to be enrolled as common sailors. I had to send them back for the Second Division. The poor young fellows I find most sympathetic and in the deepest gloom, but the Chevalier [de Ternay] does not know where he could stow them away."

But a young man who carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack was not so easily left behind. Louis Alexandre Berthier and his brother, Charles Louis, got on board a transport bound for Martinique, transferred at the "islands" to the frigate *La Gentille*, and were in Newport only a few weeks after the First Division arrived. Rochambeau immediately gave the elder of these adventurous youths a billet on his staff and kept the younger, Charles Louis, near him. While they are not signed, all the drawings of the French camps¹ in America are doubtless from the pencil and brush of this boy who, it is said, lacked a few days of his seventeenth year when he reached America.²

Naturally, the authorities in Paris were extremely anxious to supply the general with all available information in regard to the little-known part of the globe where he was proceeding on such an important mission. But where were they to secure it? There was, of course, M. de Lafayette, affable and vivacious, back home after his first campaign, but apparently they did not have complete confi-

¹Some of these drawings are in the Rochambeau Portfolio, a treasure of the MS. Division of the Congressional Library. They were purchased at the same time the Rochambeau papers were acquired from a descendant of the field marshal in 1872.

Another album of these invaluable documents was acquired by Mr. Harry Black of Baltimore, Maryland, and presented to the library of Princeton University (1942). They were purchased from the estate of the last Prince of Wagram, who fell in the first battle of World War II.

²In the narratives of those who sailed with Rochambeau, Louis Alexandre Berthier is generally mentioned as a mere lad, and again as a youth of eighteen. But if the Army archives can be relied upon, and there seems no reason to doubt them, he reached the age of twenty-eight in the trenches before Yorktown. He was, however, accompanied by his brother, Charles Louis Jean, twelve years his junior, and it was in this way doubtless that the confusion as to their respective ages came about.

dence in the information that he volunteered so readily. They said he was "Americanized" and turned elsewhere for guidance. It chanced that M. Gerard de Rayneval, the first French envoy to the United States, indeed the first diplomatic officer received by the American Government, was in Paris at the time, and, as a matter of fact, he was not to return to his post. However, he was urged to draw up a memorandum explaining the conditions with which this great overseas expedition would be confronted, and the following is an extract from his report which still slumbers among the Rochambeau papers:

"It is not possible to have our troops winter in North America," he insisted. "There is not a military barrack on the continent or any other edifice where the troops could be placed and kept under military discipline. They would have to be scattered through the villages and the countryside and be lodged with the inhabitants. The inhabitants are little accustomed to such a burden and little experienced in living with French people, for whom, as yet, they can hardly have a '*penchant bien décidé*.' They will soon get tired of such visitors, especially as the manners of these people are by no means sympathetic." In a later memorandum the Minister expressed the fear that if brought into too close contact, "the *galanterie* and the *légèreté* of the French soldiers, in contrast with the rusticity and the austerity of the colonists, would end in bloody conflicts."

Even when Rochambeau himself reached Brest, contrary to the assurances of the ministers given him in Paris, he found no ships awaiting him. And when at last, on March 27, a fleet of one hundred sail was convoyed in from Bordeaux, they proved to be for the most part small coasting vessels most unsuitable for a transatlantic voyage. "The net result is," wrote Rochambeau back to Paris,⁸ "that if I do embark on the 8th of April, wind and the Court of London permitting, I can only embark five thousand men; so Count Wittgenstein remains, to my great regret, behind with at least one third of the troops." He then goes on to say: "This is another reason why the Second Division should come after us with the greatest speed and with a surplus of provisions for the First Division of at least two months." Rochambeau further insisted that four hundred men of the Royal Artillery Corps be sent after him. And then

⁸Archives, Histoire Guerre, 3733.

he related his personal sacrifice in an official communication. This at least was not to escape history. There was not room for a single war horse and he commented that he must perforce separate himself from these tried-and-true companions of several campaigns. Turning from this tragic episode, the general concluded his report with urgent recommendations. He showed how easily, with a little good will and intelligence, the Second Division could be embarked and how necessary it was that this should be done. He received posthaste promising answers from Paris, and then the correspondence was filed away and the second contingent never sailed.

On the landing stage all the promising young men in France who wanted to participate in the great adventure were assembled, and all the great ones of the kingdom were being importuned to assist them with letters of endorsement. The Chevalier de Chastellux was successful perhaps above all others in slipping in two young men who, however, proved wholly worthy of his favor. Who could resist an appeal such as this? Though written one hundred and fifty years ago, the words are still warm and vibrant on the yellow paper.

"There is only one opinion here in regard to M. Lynch," he wrote to the Prince de Montbarey, the new War Minister. "Please remember also the Baron de Montesquieu. For four years he has served as a captain of cavalry. The King has erected a statue to his grandfather, and M. le Prince de Montbarey cannot refuse to be the founder of the fortune of the grandson. The Americans who hold M. de Montesquieu in veneration will hasten to see him and will rejoice in making the acquaintance of the grandson." Both of Chastellux's protégés slipped aboard and both served with distinction throughout the campaign.

Once in Brest, Rochambeau found to his surprise that he had not left his troubles behind him in Paris with the Minister. He was delayed and harassed by unfavorable winds and unseasonable rains, by red tape which he slashed, and by wormy water which he dumped into the harbor. Soon he took refuge on board ship. "I will now sleep on board the *Duc de Bourgogne*," he wrote to the Minister on April 12, "agreeable to the wishes of the admiral, so that we may profit by the first wind from the north." He was irritated and delayed, strangely enough, by duels. Lieutenant Colonel Dillon, who, like his immediate superior, Lauzun, was to die on the scaffold in years to

come, disappeared for a few hours. He was absent without leave, and when he came back from Nantes he had two sword wounds. "I placed him under arrest," wrote Rochambeau,⁴ "to look after his wounds and also to punish him for his fault."

When all the men that the ships could carry were embarked, it was apparent that a rear guard, a second division, even larger than at first expected, would have to be created, and poor Count Wittgenstein was chosen to command it. He wrote the most pitiful letters to M. de Montbarey. "The departure of the fleet," he wrote,⁴ "has caused me to shed tears of blood! *De grâce, mon Prince*; press M. de Sartine for the naval escort and M. Necker for the money. All our hopes rest on your activity, your love for the glory and the well-being of the state. One cannot disguise the fact," he urged, "that in cutting down the force of M. Rochambeau by one third and his provisions by the same amount, as he had the honor to warn you, his work will suffer and remain imperfect." Poor Wittgenstein—he remained in command of the Second Division for months, but his sailing orders never came and he never got to America.

On April 14 M. de Rochambeau and those who were fortunate enough to receive embarkation cards went aboard their respective ships and began to prepare for the long voyage with an as-yet-unknown destination. They concluded, as landsmen always will under similar circumstances, that their troubles were over. As a matter of fact, as they were soon to learn, the worst was still ahead. On the following morning, however, to take advantage of a fair wind, the admiral ordered the transports to pass out of the harbor and the naval escort to prepare to follow next day. When morning came and the naval escort was nosing out of the harbor, the wind changed and they were compelled to turn back and anchor in the Roads, where, a few hours later, they were rejoined by the transports running before the approaching storm.

Now things happened that were frequent in the day of sailing ships. From the seventeenth of April until the second of May the fleet was laid by the heels and the English spies who abounded had every opportunity to count sails—twelve warships and thirty-six transports tugging at their anchor chains. On the second day of May they were all able to edge out into deep water, only to find conditions there

⁴Archives National Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

anything but favorable. After tossing about for four days it was found that the log indicated progress of only one hundred and thirty miles, and the first order that came from the admiral was the wise but most unwelcome one to cut the water ration in half.

On the ninth of May the great armada ran most unexpectedly, it would seem, into a gale of wind. Many spars were lost and all the ships had to lie to. Even when the gale was ridden out, a strong head wind persisted, and the first cheerful news that came from the admiral to the general was that while they had made no progress for a week at least they had not lost sea ground! From May 21 to June 3 the winds turned favorable but unfortunately grew increasingly light, so little progress was made, and still twenty thousand men afloat were all at sea as to their destination. Up to that time the course pursued had given not the slightest clue. It was laid to the American coast as well as to "les Isles" of the West Indies, but late on June 3 the general invited frigate commanders and many field officers on board the *Duc de Bourgogne* and communicated to them his orders and plans. On the eighth, while the whole flotilla was still drifting about upon the mirrorlike waters, written orders as to the operation of landing and as to the service in America were distributed.

On board the flagship, the *Duc de Bourgogne* (eighty guns), the magnificent line-of-battle ship that was never to return to French waters,⁵ things must have been fairly comfortable. "We sail without overcrowding the troops," Rochambeau wrote to Paris, "observing the rule for long sea journeys, namely, two tons' burden for each soldier." After a fortnight at sea, Rochambeau wrote in his journal: "We have no men sick other than those the sea makes so, among whom the Marquis de Laval and my son are conspicuous."⁶

On the smaller craft conditions were different, and Baron de Closen, who later became the general's aide, dwelt at some length on the discomforts of the smaller transports. He had the misfortune to sail on the *Comtesse de Noailles*, three hundred tons; and the *Ecureuil*, a little ship that kept the *Comtesse* close company, was barely one hundred and eighty. Closen denounced the smaller transports as detestable "sabots," and indeed, he reported, they were not

⁵Wrecked off the Venezuelan coast with the loss of two hundred men in 1782.

⁶Archives Nat. Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

much larger than the footgear of the peasants at home. Before Closen received his headquarters appointment, he was attached to the Royal Deux-Ponts regiment, several companies of which sailed on this ship. He noted that the crew, one half of them Bretons and one half Provençals, "speak their own dialects," and are little accustomed to and little understand the language of naval officers. The result was, before the fleet was well under way, a collision took place between the little *Comtesse* and a great ship of the line, the *Conquerant*; the little sabot lost her bowsprit and the face of the charming *Comtesse* was smashed to bits.

M. de Closen's heart sank. Would they be left behind even at this late hour? M. Deux-Ponts, his colonel, promised fifteen louis d'or to the workmen if the damaged vessel was repaired by noon the next day. A very expert naval constructor was secured, to hasten and supervise the work. He wisely encouraged the workmen by "extra distributions," and at eleven o'clock the next day Closen wrote: "The amiable *Comtesse* was taken again—with no head, it is true—like so many countesses—behind the harbor chain," and so was restored to her place in the convoy.

M. de Closen, evidently a very wise young man, cultivated the acquaintance and favor of his skipper, whom he described as an interesting, but by no means unusual, type at sea. He seemed to have had equal faith in help from hymns in praise of Our Lady and in oaths. "Prayers," wrote Closen, "are said twice a day on the deck, which does not prevent there being much irreligion among our sailors. I have often heard our captain chanting:

*"Je mets ma confiance,
Vierge, en votre secours,
Et quand ma dernière heure
Viendra, guidez mon sort,"*

then, suddenly interrupting himself, he would break out into oaths and imprecations such as, according to our young landlubber, "are only to be found in the sailor's vocabulary."

It was a long, tedious voyage, and though even the subaltern Army officers had received fifty francs each before sailing to supply themselves with little comforts such as "sugar and lemons and syrups in quantities," the food was none too good, and scurvy began to

claim numerous victims, especially among the rank and file; but the French *poilu* is a great rustler for food, apparently even at sea. They captured any number of flying fish, and Cloisen reported that "when fried in fresh butter they are very tender and delicious to eat, like gudgeons."

During the outward voyage our chronicler lamented the smallness of the vessel upon which he was lodged, but later on, when he transferred to the *Brave*, seventy-four, "a large-sized sabot," he admits he found but little difference; "big and little, they are all tossed about, these sabots, like shells.

"One can scarcely imagine the bigness of the sea, the noise, the height of the waves, such pitching and rolling that it was impossible to stand; the ships disappearing at times as if they had been swallowed by the sea, to touch it the instant after only with a tiny bit of the keel. What a nasty element! And how sincerely we hate it, all of us of the land troops! The lugubrious noise of the masts, the *crics-cracs* of the vessel, the terrible movements which, on the sudden, raise you aloft, and to which we were not at all accustomed; the perpetual encumbrance that forty-five officers are for each other, forty having no other place of refuge than a single room for them all; the sad faces of those who are sick . . . the dirt, the boredom, the feeling that one is shut up in a sabot as in a state prison—all this is only part of what goes to make life unpleasant for a land officer on a vessel, even a naval one. . . . But let us take courage."

The sufferings of the soldiers and sailors in the cramped quarters of the fleet made an indelible impression even upon Lauzun, a seasoned traveler. Years later, when he wrote his memoirs, the horrors of the passage were still living memories. "Life on board was simply terrible. On each of the ships there were six or seven hundred men packed like sardines in a case. At mealtime all these ill-clad sailors and soldiers were collected in the galley aft and, devoured as they were by lice, fleas, and bugs, were made to sit down on the floor. Then the rations were served out in mangers as if they were horses. Five times a week there was hard biscuit in the morning, often uneatable, and a little wine. At noon a little salt meat was served out, and at five in the evening some broth made of beans and sour crout. It would have been well if all hands had been given vegetables." As this was not done, the cases of scurvy, between 40 and 50 per cent of

all on board, were not surprising. Few, indeed, could have been the pleasant incidents of the protracted voyage, and the only one that the dashing hussar records are the ship concerts in mid-Atlantic. He had the band of the legion on board the *Provence*, and when the great armada was becalmed, as it was from time to time for many days, he would arrange a concert and the other ships gathered around so that the men on the transports without bands might enjoy the rare treat of soothing music.

The armada passed to the south of the Azores, seeking a favorable slant, and on June 5, with a fresh wind from the east, a squadron of six ships came into view. They were evidently British, and of course all the Army men on board were tremendously excited at the prospect of a sea battle. To their delight shots soon were exchanged, although at long range; then the British ships veered away, and to the amazement and horror of the Duc de Lauzun, the Count de Deux-Ponts, and the Marquis Duportail, the admiral refused to follow or, as he says, to fight, unless the battle was forced on him. It is clear that if the eager youngsters had said at the time what they put in their diaries they would one and all have been placed in irons and charged with mutiny. One of them wrote: "He lets the English squadron escape! Now we know what small inclination our general has to fight. He will not pursue vessels we have the good fortune to meet! He seems indifferent. What a misfortune!"

Fortunately the admiral and the general were in agreement; after all, the land army and the convoy were their first care and responsibility and they made a wise decision, but poor Lauzun was sure he could never hold up his head again, such a humiliation! But the event more than justified the cautious policy. Admiral Graves, coming from England with his squadron in pursuit of the armada, joined Admiral Arbuthnot off New York at the very hour when the French fleet with the slow-sailing transports entered Narragansett Bay and the united squadrons gave the British supremacy at sea, for the time being, which it would have been foolhardy for the French to dispute with the force they had available.

On June 18 the monotony of the voyage across the trackless ocean was relieved by the sight of another sail and the swift capture of a British corsair by the *Surveillante*. At first a cause of rejoicing, the incident brought bad news. Of course the French did not believe

what the British captain said, but alas! the American papers found on board reported that "Charleston has fallen. Lincoln has been compelled to surrender to an overpowering force!"

The admiral and the general had a council of war, and put on their thinking caps. What had happened in the South might also have happened in the North, and now what news would await them when Point Judith or Cape Henry was sighted? Certainly the French were in a worse plight than Pershing's men in 1917. Then it was quite possible that Verdun had fallen, or that Paris had been evacuated, but at least there could be no anxiety about the friendly reception that awaited them off Brest or Bordeaux once they arrived, but here was a French fleet, with a French army on board, plowing its way across the Western Ocean, without the least certainty that over and beyond the distant horizon there was an open haven in the hands of friends, ready and willing to welcome them.

Still the voyage was by no means ended, and the admiral and the general had many more opportunities for councils of war and the younger officers for indignation meetings. With the approach to the coast, new dangers presented themselves which did not have to be taken into consideration out on the blue water. Heavy fogs settled down on the fleet, and Closen, with his recently acquired sea lore, explained the situation delightfully. "Nothing so dangerous or so sad at sea as fog," he wrote, and he described the difficulty of avoiding collisions, and also the great danger of a ship's straying too far from the center and so losing contact. "To avoid these dangers and inconveniences," he wrote, "our speed limit was reduced to three knots, and we beat the drums or fired petards every fifteen minutes, while the men-of-war fired their guns or sent up rockets."

In spite of all these precautions, one of the largest ships, the *Ile de France*, strayed and was lost sight of. Many days later, when her capture seemed a foregone conclusion, she reached Boston harbor with the French flag flying, but with four hundred men desperately ill with the scurvy.

One of the confidential reports (it probably came from M. Gerard)⁷ given the general to read on the voyage, which is still to be seen in the original in the archives,⁸ is interesting, though not flatter-

⁷M. Gerard de Rayneval, the first envoy of France to the United States.

⁸Archives Nat. Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

ing to our *amour propre* today. It reads: "There is great poverty and want reigning in North America, and a great lack of everything needed in the state of war upon which we are engaged. Even the simple wants of a daily life are lacking. It is, therefore, necessary to provide abundantly for all the needs of the expeditionary force and to convert into merchandise, that is, into necessary articles, some part of the funds placed at the disposal of the division. Perhaps also one could carry over indispensable articles which could be sold to the Americans *à des prix avantageux*, but on moderate terms with justice, *droiture*, and intelligence."

There was still another dossier in the great carton of instructions which Rochambeau carried. It was marked to be read only when the fleet had left land behind for ten days. It contained the explicit instructions which the King had drawn up and signed at Versailles on March 1. I doubt very much if M. de Rochambeau was in any particular hurry to read them; as a matter of fact, he knew very well from correspondence and talks with Vergennes what the envelope contained; and he knew that he who had been selected to lead and command the invasion of England was expected throughout his stay in America to act in a subordinate capacity. Yet he must have read them over very carefully before mid-Atlantic was reached because, as Vergennes told him, he must communicate his instructions to General Washington at the first possible moment.

In any event, let us peep over the general's shoulder as he breaks the seals and reads the instructions, which apparently are to be secret to everyone, excepting Washington. They read:

In sending this corps which His Majesty has furnished with its proper complement of artillery for sieges and service in the field, in sending such considerable succors to co-operate with General Washington, commander in chief of the troops of the Congress of the United States of North America, in the military operations which he may determine upon the intentions of His Majesty are:

I. That the General to whom His Majesty entrusts the command of his troops should always and in all cases be under the command of General Washington.

II. That the projects and plans for the campaign, or for private expeditions, should be decided upon by the American General, keeping in view the harmony which His Majesty hopes to see maintained be-

tween the two commanders in chief as well as the generals and the soldiers of the two nations.

III. The French troops, being only auxiliaries, should, on this account, as was done in Germany in the campaign of 1757, yield precedence and the right to the American troops; and this decision is to hold good in all general or particular cases which may occur.

IV. In consequence of the above article the American officers with equal rank and the same date of commission shall have the command, and in all cases the American troops shall take the right. In all military proceedings and capitulations the American General and Troops shall be named first and will sign first, as has always been the custom, and in accordance with the principles above laid down in regard to auxiliary troops.

V. It is His Majesty's expectation and very positive order to Count de Rochambeau that he will see to the exact and literal execution of the above four Articles.

It was certainly fortunate that while M. Clemenceau prided himself, and not without reason, upon his knowledge of American history, his personal recollections at least did not go back farther than our Civil War. Had these instructions been in his portfolio or on the tip of his ready tongue, the famous polemic which he carried on so long with General Pershing as to the disposition of the American troops in France might have been even more difficult than it was for the American leader to sustain.

In quest of the favoring Trades the admiral reached over almost to the African coast. He was disappointed, however, and soon warships and transports alike were becalmed. During these long days, when the great fleet was practically stationary in the oily waters, we shall have an opportunity of opening another one of M. de Rochambeau's dossiers and so familiarize ourselves, as he undoubtedly sought to do, with the trend of circumstances which preceded and led up to the sailing of the great fleet.

Early in 1779 Lafayette had returned to France charged with two very difficult missions. First, he was to explain why the operations of d'Estaing had failed, and secondly he was to induce our good friend, the King of France, to make another effort, to send a larger fleet and a larger landing force under instructions more suitable to transatlantic conditions, and, shall we say, more in consonance with the American mentality.

In his letter to the Count de Maurepas, dated January 25, 1780, Lafayette disclosed some of the difficulties by which he had been confronted. He, however, reduced to but two the objections which had been made to his plans, and in any event his letter should prove interesting reading. Perhaps he did not fully understand the American situation. Small wonder! Apparently few Americans did. But it is of almost equal interest to record his impressions even if they were based on misinformation.

Of course Lafayette wanted to command the new French Army, a most natural ambition; and he endowed the officer who was absolutely needed for this command with qualifications which only he could supply. Fortunately, the command went to the veteran Rochambeau, but young Lafayette, in his frankness, disclosed other things besides his vaulting ambition. Objection number one advanced by the French authorities to his plans he summarized as follows: (1) that our Allies have not the strength and the courage to co-operate with us, and (2) that this co-operation would produce jealousy among the people and disputes with the American Army. His answer to the first objection is: "I have seen them [the Americans] facing the far-famed infantry of England and of Hesse under circumstances which would have done honor to veteran troops."

As to the second objection, he admitted there was some substance to it, but he added, "not enough to deter us. If, however," he continued, "the French commander should not know how to deal with the sentiment of Congress and of each particular state; if he should understand neither the prejudices of the people nor the different parties in the government nor the way in which to satisfy the Army nor the proper mode of dealing with the civil authorities; if he should talk to an officer from Boston as he would to one from New York, to a member of the Assembly of Pookepsie [*sic*], as to one from the self-styled state of New York, he would be absolutely sure to give offense, absolutely sure to defeat the purpose of his voyage."

In his eagerness, young Lafayette now dropped all disguise and presented his claims even more frankly. He wrote: "Yet in the event of my having the command of the land detachments, I will answer for it upon my head that I shall avoid even a shadow of jealousy or dispute," and concluded, "but I shall content myself, M. le Comte, with assuring you that I am willing to go out merely as a volunteer

if you wish me to do so; and in contributing to the French commander the small amount of knowledge that I may possess, I shall also forego, for his benefit, all the personal advantages which I have in America, not as a favor to him or to the Minister, but for the good of my country.”⁹

A few weeks after this correspondence was closed, Lafayette was back in America. The good news that he brought came in the very nick of time. Perhaps the young soldier had not been appointed our Ambassador Extraordinary to France as he assumed, and yet few diplomats with proper credentials have ever scored such a victory, the fruits of which he now brought with him. Despite growing discontent at home, falling revenues, and increasing demands upon his exchequer, the King had agreed to send a larger naval and military force.

With rare tact Lafayette had brought home to the King and his advisers that the failure of d’Estaing had been due in part at least to want of co-operation, to lack of a supreme command. There was to be no more of this. The new forces that were coming were to be termed auxiliaries, and Washington was to be recognized as Commander in Chief of the Allied forces in the American world. With this good news, and, with what was equally welcome, a supply of specie to replenish the exhausted American coffers, Lafayette arrived in Boston on the frigate *Hermione* in April. He also brought with him an outline of the instructions which were to be given to de Grasse, the commander of the West Indian squadron then fitting out in Brest (where in 1918 our principal “bridge of boats” ended), and to the Count de Rochambeau, who had been selected for the Army command.

These instructions Lafayette was authorized to communicate to Washington at the first opportunity, and they read in part:

“The French troops shall be simply auxiliaries, and with this title they shall come under the orders of General Washington. The French General shall receive the orders of the American commander in chief in all things except what pertains to the internal management of his own troops, which ought to be regulated according to the laws of his own country. It shall be the duty of the Naval Commander to second by every means in his power all the

⁹Doniol: *La Participation*, etc., IV, 308.

operations to which his aid shall be asked. As the operations must depend on circumstances and local possibilities, we forbear to give any instructions on the subject. It must be left to General Washington and his Council of War to decide what shall be most useful. All the King desires for the Americans is to relieve them from the oppression of their enemies in the most effectual manner. In case the operations by land should not require the concert of the squadron, it will be free to cruise at such a distance from the coasts as the Commandant shall think best for doing the most harm to the enemy, but special orders will be given that it shall not go far and that it shall undertake no operations except with the advice of the Commander on land (Washington)."

On one of the many warm afternoons when the Trades had piped down, the fleet was becalmed, and the staff officers and other privileged characters, as was their custom, went visiting in skiffs from ship to ship to debate and discuss their probable destination (for most of them, like Chief Commissary Blanchard, were still betting on Jamaica!). Let us take a nearer view of the French general who is to play such a prominent role in the decisive transatlantic campaign. In the first place, he is closemouthed and keeps his own counsel, as experienced generals wisely do, but in not letting the officers know where they are bound until mid-Atlantic he is perhaps emphasizing reticence until it becomes a vice. We are told he has *bourrasques*, sudden fits of temper, quite frequently. All his officers are in agreement on this point and many have gloomy forebodings as to the fate that is awaiting them but, in the end, they one and all make honorable amends. It was a fortunate campaign, they admit, because they were fortunate in their general. Fersen voiced the opinion of officers and men alike when later he wrote to his father that it was great good luck that Rochambeau, though not in good health, lasted out the campaign, "for no one with the Army could have taken his place."

Soon it was apparent that Rochambeau was only fretful when he had nothing to do, though to be sure the "court soldiers," and there were many with the fleet, got on his nerves until the excellent qualities of most of them came to the front with opportunity for service. The bluff, hard-bitten French lieutenant general who was to deserve, though he did not receive a field marshal's baton for his American

campaign, often speaks of himself as having been born in a camp when, as a matter of fact, he came into the world that was to be so troubled in his day on his father's Vendôme estate. As he was the second son, and quite delicate as a child, he was destined for the Church. In his fifteenth year he was in a seminary studying for the priesthood, when, as he describes the scene in his memoirs, the bishop sent for him and told him of his brother's death and of his sharp change of profession.

"Donatien," said the bishop, "you must now serve your King with as much zeal as you would, I doubt not, have served God in the ecclesiastical state."

By all accounts young Donatien did this very thing. Of his seminary training the only thing that stayed with him through life was a smattering of Latin of which he was, it is said, inordinately proud. His was a hard school which is, of course, the best one. At the age of sixteen he was fighting in Germany under Marshal de Saxe. He was twice wounded at Laufeldt and, a colonel at twenty-two, he commanded the famous Auvergne regiment, "Auvergne Sans Tâche," and led it in most of the battles of the Seven Years' War. He led it to victory at Klosterkamp, where he was again severely wounded, and the regiment lost fifty-eight officers and eight hundred men killed and wounded.

These experiences of actual warfare and his contempt for the military knowledge, or rather the lack of it, of the officers who served in Paris, nerved him to make his very decided protest as to the smallness of the force he was leading to America. Several times before sailing he had written to the Prince de Montbarey, the Minister of War: "The four thousand men I have with me is really nothing. You do not have to be very tenacious in holding your ground to lose one third of your force in an infantry action," and then for emphasis he stated that at Laufeldt, and in several other actions fought in Germany, he had lost two thirds of his men before victory perched upon his banners. "I repeat and repeat," he continued, "that I need twelve battalions, six thousand men at least, and a detachment of cavalry." But when they put him off with a scant four thousand and several companies of irregulars, of Lauzun's legion, of whom he had a poor opinion, and the promise of a second division a few weeks later, a promise which was never kept, he went his way and promised to do the best he could.

As the general looked over his orders and studied the innumerable and not always illuminating dossiers in regard to American affairs, with which ministers had loaded down his baggage, he must have been struck with the following memorandum from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vergennes, which still survives in the archives.¹⁰ It is the opening shot of a controversy which was long-spun before it was settled. Vergennes expressed himself as all in favor of an attack on New York right away, but added this admirable saving clause: "Everything, of course, must be left to the sagacity and intelligence of the American officers better acquainted with the localities and the circumstances." It was fortunate indeed for General Pershing that this paragraph never fell under the eye of M. Clemenceau, omnivorous reader though he was. It would indeed have furnished him with a supporting precedent for the position he maintained without it, almost down to the armistice of 1918.

In these long summer afternoons the French general had the time to think about the men he was to fight with and the men he was to fight against in America. Curiously enough he knew all about Cornwallis. In the bloody fight at Klosterkamp they had come face to face, and he knew that the man he was to be pitted against was no holiday soldier.

And Washington? It would be interesting to know the real feelings of this trained and professional soldier at being placed under the orders of a wilderness pathfinder, a colonial soldier who had never commanded regular troops, who had had only four years of warfare to his credit against the thirty-eight years of experience which Rochambeau had enjoyed, under, or opposed to, the most famous captains of Europe. Whatever his real feelings were, Rochambeau never disclosed them, and perhaps the best measure of these remarkable men who worked so harmoniously in the cause of liberty is revealed by the fact that Rochambeau seemed to delight in the orders which he received from the American leader who was his junior in years, without his varied experience, and that Washington could give his senior orders, and very firm orders they were, in a way that conveyed the impression he was asking for advice!

Among the many other dossiers which in the course of the voyage both the admiral of the fleet and the commander of the expedition-

¹⁰Archives Nat. Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

any force were enjoined to read and digest most carefully was a document fortunately still carefully preserved in the archives of France which deals in great detail with the precautionary measures to be observed, once the Atlantic was crossed and a landfall near. While this interesting document, which sheds a flood of light on the state of our affairs at the time, was signed by Vergennes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who always treated his colleagues of the ministries of War and Marine as though they were his subordinates (as a matter of fact, at this juncture they were), it bears evidence of having been drafted with the assistance of M. de Lafayette and of M. Gerard, the American experts of the moment.

It may be recalled that when in 1917 the American troops began to move toward France they were beset by many dangers. They had to sail for many critical hours on seas infested by submarines and floating mines, but there was no manner of uncertainty with regard to the Channel ports, and once the dangers of the deep were passed a safe haven and a pleasant one, comparatively speaking, awaited them. The French expeditionary force was not faced by such a pleasant prospect, and it is not surprising that almost daily Rochambeau should have entered in his diary or appended to his insistent dispatches to Versailles the slogan "We must have naval superiority—that is indispensable for the success of the campaign."

These doubts and fears of the French general were certainly justified in the circumstances by which he was confronted. Except when Boreas "blew outrageously" and sent them scudding, close-hauled from their stations, the British ships were at this critical moment in the affairs of the alliance in complete control of the American coast. Both the admiral and the general were warned of the danger the expeditionary force ran of being decoyed into a port which the British might well have wrested from the Americans, and there can be no doubt that throughout the voyage they both carefully studied and discussed the precautions they were enjoined to take so that this disaster might be avoided. The document illuminating the uncertainties of the situation reads:¹¹

The Convoy has orders to land the troops in Rhode Island, where they may be at hand to join General Washington's army, if he shall

¹¹Archives Nat. Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

think it necessary; but, as it is possible that the English, after having voluntarily evacuated Rhode Island may return to it and take possession, it is necessary (to prevent the French squadron from suffering a surprise), that the Marquis de la Fayette should request General Washington to send to Rhode Island, even to Block Island, if the inhabitants can be trusted, some of the French officers who are serving with him. Each one of these messengers should be the bearer of a letter from him advising the Admiral that the French Squadron may freely and with perfect safety enter the port.

But as the weather or other circumstances may not permit these officers to go immediately on board, if the entrance to Rhode Island should be free and open, they (the Americans) shall hoist on Block Island and also on Point Judith and Sakonnet the French flag. And if the contrary is the case, if the enemy shall have retaken possession of the Island, the American flag shall be hoisted, which shall be a signal to the French commander to bear away from the port. Should no French officer appear with a letter from General la Fayette, giving instructions as to the advisability of disembarking, and should no signals be seen, the French squadron with its convoy will go into Boston harbor and there await advices from General Washington.

To guard against any accident or even subterfuge through which these officers may be replaced by suspicious persons, the words of reconnaissance shall be "Saint Louis and Philadelphia." Should the winds force the squadron to the south, it should proceed to the Capes of Virginia. Therefore let an intelligent officer be stationed at Cape Henry, with orders to join the Squadron, who shall be well instructed as to the American situation and especially with regard to the possibility of landing on Rhode Island. In case of the affirmative the same signals are to be shown at Cape Henry as at Rhode Island, but here the words of reconnaissance shall be "Marie and Boston." If General Washington thinks the French troops can be more usefully employed in the South, this officer will bring orders to this effect.

On the evening of July 9 the first sign of the approaching landfall was welcomed enthusiastically. It was on the afternoon of the sixty-ninth day the Army had spent at sea that a small coasting vessel appeared and came alongside. In answer to anxious inquiries someone on board the little craft told the French that they were off land which strangely enough he called "No Man's Island," and, further, that they were close to Martha's Vineyard. The vessels were ordered to heave to and anchor for the night. Only at noon the next day they

set sail again, and the entries in M. Blanchard's diary¹² which had been so meager suddenly became copious.

"Some pilots reached us from the islands," he wrote, "the one we took on board told us the Americans were still masters of Rhode Island, and he told us he did not believe the English had a greater force than ours in these waters. He was a good man and displayed intelligence."

Toward evening the mainland was sighted in the dim blue distance, and on the eleventh the ships were enveloped in a heavy fog for some hours off Point Judith. Fortunately it lifted, and the sea-weary soldiers were cheered by the welcome sight of the familiar lilies of France displayed on a banner with a white background, indicating that the haven now so near was still in friendly hands. M. Blanchard confessed that this was "a great joy—I write in the first moment of excitement; one must have been at sea in the midst of the sick and dying to appreciate our feelings." Hundreds of soldiers were still sick and hundreds had died. "These were slipped out through the portholes at night so as not to depress their comrades," he explained. "What adds to our satisfaction is the fact we do not discover a sail and that according to all appearances we shall land without hindrance. This is greatly to be desired, for there are hundreds of sick in all the vessels of the squadron and the convoy. We distinguished the shore of Point Judith perfectly; it appeared most pleasant to us. The wind was light, but having risen somewhat at four o'clock, M. de Ternay ordered the ships of war to set sail. The sea was most calm and everything favored our progress so that we reached Newport about seven o'clock." But off Beaver Tail a dripping wet fog fell like a pall over land and water alike, robbing the great event of the coming of the French of all dramatic effect.

¹²M. Blanchard was chief commissary of the French expeditionary force. His *Journal* was published in Paris in 1798.

II

Delay and Depression

UNFORTUNATELY there is not the slightest room for doubt that the arrival of the French expedition in Newport was a complete fiasco. Perhaps the cold and clammy fog which concealed the seven stately line-of-battle ships, the five frigates with the lilies of France displayed at the masthead, and the many transports that followed in their wake was responsible. Perhaps it was owing to the fact that General Heath, coming from Providence, who had been ordered by Washington to head the committee of welcome, was becalmed out in the bay, and only reached the city on the twelfth; in the meantime it is certain that no self-appointed cheerleader had seen his opportunity and seized it.

Rochambeau, in his letter to the Minister (July 16)¹, admitted that his reception had been cold. He described how he landed with his staff and noted the complete indifference of the inhabitants. "There was no one about in the streets; only a few sad and frightened faces in the windows. I talked to some of the principal citizens, informing them that this was but the vanguard of a much larger force on the way and that the King had decided to uphold them with all his power and strength." The general concluded on a more cheerful note: "This excellent news traveled fast, and on the evening of the following day all the houses were illuminated, the bells rang out, and there were fireworks."

M. de Charlus, the son of the Duc de Castries, Minister of the

¹Archives Nat. Marine.

Navy, in his journal² gave a more detailed explanation. "We had been expected for at least two months," he wrote, "and the Americans had counted on 10,000 men. There were a great many Tories about and the general was not received as he should have been. When he landed there was no one to meet him and he went to lodge at the hotel, unwelcomed. It was only the following day that he was able to meet the Governor of the City. He made all his arrangements, however, for landing the troops, and went himself to look over the places selected for the camps."

Count William de Deux-Ponts also thought the reception was anything but what it should have been, and in his diary he drew the following inference: "A coldness and a reserve appear to me to be characteristic of the American nation; they seem to have little of that enthusiasm which one would suppose belongs to a people fighting for its liberties, and indeed they seem to be little suited to inspire enthusiasm in others. But these considerations shall not in the least change my resolution, and they occupy my thoughts less than my reflections upon our military and political situation."

While Washington, detained by a thousand pressing cares in his distant camp, did not hasten to welcome the French, he took formal notice of their arrival in a way that was highly appreciated, as the diaries of the French officers clearly indicate. In orders to the Continental Army he directed, as a recognition of the "generous succor" that had come, "that all officers of the Army should in the future wear cockades of black (as to ground) and white as to relief as a symbol of Union and Alliance." The American cockade hitherto had been black and that of the French white. Some of these cockades, eloquent of a great event in our history, are still preserved today by the descendants of the men who wore them, and some may be seen in the Revolutionary museum in Fraunces' Tavern in New York City.

Though General Heath, most unfortunately, came late, when he did arrive, he spared no effort to bring the French in contact with the prominent people of the Providence Plantations. Not a few visitors came from adjacent colonies to assure the French that they appreciated the "succors" they brought. Among these, and the most prominent, was Dr. Stiles, president of Yale College, in whose in-

²Archives Nat. Marine.

valuable diary are recorded his impressions and those of his friend, William Channing, the father of the famous philanthropist.

Quoting the opinion of Channing, he wrote: "The French Troops are a fine body of men, and they appear to be well officered. Neither Officers nor Men are the effeminate Beings we were heretofore taught to believe them. They are as large and as likely men as can be produced by any Nation. The Arrival of the Fleet and Army hath given new Life to the Town. There is more Business transaction and money circulating than formerly." On October 7 Stiles wrote his own impressions: "Dined at the General's—de Rochambeau—in a Splendid manner. There were perhaps thirty at table. I conversed with the General in Latin. He speaks it tolerably."

Two days later there is another entry which shows that the feasts continued: "Dined at General de Chastellux in a Splendid manner on thirty-five dishes. He is a Capital Literary Character, a member of the French Academy. He is the Glory of the Army."

But the very next entry indicated that good Dr. Stiles did not allow these unusual events to interfere with his immediate duties. It reads:

"8th Lords Day. I preached in the Sabb. meeting to my Dear Newport Flock. My meetinghouse and three others taken up for the Hospitals."

The regiments that came out to America under Rochambeau, as well as those under the command of Saint-Simon that joined Washington a year later, were undoubtedly the fine flower of the French Army. The Royal Auvergne had been formed by Henry IV and it first became famous at the siege of La Rochelle. The Royal Auvergne bore its title until 1776, when, by royal decree, all the ancient regiments were, for some administrative purpose, divided into two units. One retained the name of Auvergne, while the other was baptized Gatinais, both terms indicating the provinces of ancient France where, for the most part, the men were recruited. The two battalions that bore the name of Gatinais came out to the French West Indies in 1777, and two years later were joined to the force of d'Estaing. At Savannah, though badly placed and outnumbered, they fought most gallantly and, when compelled to retreat, did so in perfect order. They wintered at Martinique, came back to America with

Saint-Simon, and, together with the Royal Deux-Ponts, played the principal role in the French assault at Yorktown.

In his memoirs Rochambeau, who had been a subaltern in this regiment, tells an affecting story of the personal appeal he made to these gallant fellows as they advanced through the darkness to the English redoubt. "My children," he said, "I have great need of you tonight. I trust you will not forget that we have served together in the brave Regiment of Auvergne, surnamed Auvergne *sans tâche*—the spotless."

"They cried out," wrote the French general, " 'If you give us back our honored name we will do everything to deserve it. We will fight like lions until the last man is killed.' " Very proudly Rochambeau related the pleasure he enjoyed in describing their gallant conduct during the first audience he had with the King upon his return to France, and the gracious manner in which the sovereign restored to them the title they had so gallantly won.* However, it was not for long. In 1791, it was decreed that all the special regimental titles should be discarded and that in the future all organizations would be numbered. The Royal Auvergne became the 18th Infantry and under Napoleon at Rivoli the regiment won new distinction. On that field Napoleon hailed them as "Brave 18th! I know you well. No enemy can stand before your charge."

The Royal Deux-Ponts was recruited in what is now the Sarre basin, so long a bone of contention between Germany and France. At the time this district was the Duchy of Deux-Ponts, and the duke was hereditary colonel-proprietor of the regiment. Two nephews of the duke by amorganatic marriage were respectively colonel (Count Christian Forbach de Deux-Ponts) and lieutenant colonel (Count William Forbach de Deux-Ponts) of the famous regiment. In the later Napoleonic Wars the Royal Deux-Ponts became the favorite fighting arm of Marshal Ney, and in the great war of 1914, as the 99th Infantry, it had a record second to none.

According to the archives of the French Ministry of War, the Bourbonnais regiment was formed in the year 1600 to fight in the Spanish war and was largely recruited in Provence. It embarked from Brest with Rochambeau and by capturing Pigeon Hill before Yorktown on September 30, 1781, was the first of the French

*Memoirs, Paris, 1808.

"auxiliaries" to meet the British. In 1791 it became the 13th Infantry and throughout the great war clung tenaciously to its gallantly earned motto, "*En avant sur les Canons.*"

The Soissonais regiment, of which the Vicomte de Noailles, brother-in-law of Lafayette, was "second" colonel, worked shoulder to shoulder with the Bourbonnais regiment throughout the American campaign and was generally brigaded with it, much as in the Continental Army the Delaware battalion always stood side by side with the Maryland Line. According to the records it is one of the most ancient regiments, having been formed in 1598 out of a "group of very select *gentilshommes*." It still clings to its ancient motto, the words of a sergeant who was killed in the hour of victory, "What does it matter? We have won the battle." It is now the 40th Infantry of the line.

Vicomte de Rochambeau, the son of the general who, after a long military career, fell in the battle of Leipzig, commanded throughout the American campaign the famous Saintonge regiment. It was recruited in the old French province of that name which gave Champlain to America. It was formed as early as 1684 from an ancient regiment of Navarre. In many regimental and other histories it is stated that this regiment took a gallant part in the capture of Stony Point under Wayne. This is a mistake, because this action was fought before the regiment or any other French regiments arrived in America. The mistake has arisen probably because Colonel Fleury, the French volunteer who on many occasions so greatly distinguished himself and the army in which he was trained, led one group of the American light infantry in this memorable attack and was awarded a medal by the Continental Congress. The medal is still in existence. It bears the motto "*le premier dans la place,*" or "the first in the fortress." When the Saintonge regiment arrived in America, Fleury was assigned to it, and in the passage of time and the confusion of history the regiment took to itself the distinction of this gallant young officer which was confirmed in writing by Washington himself.

The legion of Lauzun, one of the most distinguished of the French units, fares very badly in the French official records of the campaign. Lauzun's explanation of why he and his organization were treated in a slighting manner is given in another place. As was the case with most legions at the time, it was composed of both infantry and

cavalry (hussars), and this organization was created by royal decree in 1780. It was largely composed of military adventurers from all European nations, and the roster of officers reveals many Polish names.

As the first letters exchanged between Washington and Rochambeau have apparently never been published in America and perhaps not in France, I shall print them as they are found in the French archives.⁴ Rochambeau's letter is dated the day of his arrival, and reads:

"SIR: The commands of the King, my master, place me under the orders of Your Excellency. I come, wholly obedient and with the zeal and the veneration which I have for you and for the remarkable talents you have displayed in sustaining a war which will always be memorable."

Then a great deal of information is furnished in regard to the want of transports and the activity of the British in blockading Havre and St. Malo, delaying the Second Division.

"So the King decided to send me off with the First Division, in which I have brought every man and all the provisions it was possible to embark at Brest."

Washington's answer, dated July 16, reads: "I hasten to communicate to you with what happiness I have received the auspicious news of your safe arrival, and in my name and in the name of the American Army I present to you the assurance of my deep appreciation and my lively gratitude to the Allies who have come so generously to our aid."⁵

In the very first hours of his arrival Rochambeau was well-nigh overwhelmed by a budget of discouraging news that reached him, apparently from the French consul in Boston. He was assured that Washington had with him only a handful of men, and that their morale was very low. Fortunately a most opportune letter from M. de la Luzerne⁶ arrived at this time, warning the general against this pessimism:

"He (the consul) is the man least capable of giving you a just idea of this country; you should believe Lafayette's reports," he insisted.

⁴Archives Nat. Guerre, 3733 and 3735.

⁵Ibid.

⁶The French Minister in Philadelphia.

"There is an excellent spirit in the American Army, the Continental soldier is inured to fatigue, and their officers are yearning to distinguish themselves. In Washington you will discover qualities which will attach you to him. This is the respectful opinion of a former colonel of infantry to his inspector (de la Luzerne came from the Army to diplomacy), and in this capacity I will always receive your orders in this country." Very handsome words indeed from an Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and they augured well for a good understanding between the civil and the military leaders of our Allies which happily was maintained throughout the critical days that were to follow.

Those who are laboring under the delusion that propaganda that played such an important role in World War I was an invention of that period can read with advantage what was written in the *Royal Gazette* of New York while the French fleet was yet at sea.

"From Marquis de Lafayette's report to Mr. Washington, the Chevalier de Ternay may be expected at this time to land a body of troops on this continent; in which case possession of the land would be taken in the name of the French King . . . the Prospect of the French Army landing in the northern provinces alarms the Republican fraternity in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Should their Roman Catholic allies ever nestle themselves in one of the revolted States it is apprehended that their independence must give way to the establishment of French government, laws, and customs, ever abhorrent to the sour and turbulent temper of the Puritan."

How little changed we are in such matters will occur to those who recall what a section of the German press announced in 1915 would happen when the British Army was once established in northern France and had laid fast hold on its former prey, the port of Calais. It is only fair to say that some of this propaganda found an echo in several *défaitiste* journals of France. Also that many a good Puritan of New England was truly alarmed in 1780 at this influx of Papist soldiers in such gay apparel.

In his first letter, as has been seen, Rochambeau placed himself unreservedly under the orders of Washington, and in the second (he was not the man to let grass grow under his feet) he began to talk plans. He hoped "horses would soon be available, as he wanted

above all things to mount the hussar squadrons of Lauzun's legion." If all goes well, he says he will "be ready in a month's time for active operations." Then about finance, most welcome news of all to people who had not seen "hard" money for months: "I have brought sufficient funds to pay in cash for all the needs of the regiments of the King's army, and I will maintain as strict discipline as though the army were encamped under the walls of Paris." It is to his everlasting credit that the French general did both these things, difficult as they must have been under the war practice of the day.⁷

Suddenly the drab scene of Newport was transformed into rainbow streets of brilliant colors. The infantry soldiers from overseas—and these were the greater number—wore white coats and long waistcoats, the color of the coat lapels and the collar bands serving to distinguish the different regiments, some crimson and pink and others sky blue, green, and a variety of yellows. The non-commissioned officers sported white plumes while those of the grenadiers were red and the chasseurs green. The artilleryists wore long, iron-gray coats faced very sumptuously with red velvet. Confronted with so much splendor it is little wonder that many of our simple folk, accustomed to the sight of "ragged Continentals," were dazzled. But some there were who said and wrote in their diaries that the French King was both extravagant and reckless in exposing such rich garments to the hazards of war and the hard usage of camps.

After the surprise of the cold reception had worn off the French officers very quickly grew to like the place and also the kindly but undemonstrative inhabitants. Protected from sea attack by the floating "castles" of the fleet and on the land side by the heavy artillery brought from France and the continued lethargy of the British, Rochambeau, without relaxing vigilance or discipline, evidently saw to it that his men should enjoy as many comforts as possible and did much toward establishing pleasant social relations. Officers and men soon waxed enthusiastic. Several of the diarists were reminded of their beloved Normandy "because of the contours of the land and the quality of the fruits." They were all in agreement that before the war Rhode Island "must have been one of the most agreeable spots in the world, and that even now, with so many houses destroyed by

⁷Archives Nat. Guerre. Rochambeau Correspondence.

the British fire and most of the beautiful woods cut down, it is still a charming place of residence."⁸

The best of the houses that had escaped the vicissitudes of war were, of course, assigned to the principal French officers, and fortunately many of these truly colonial houses have survived the touch of time and the "restorer" to this day. Rochambeau lived in the Vernon house, a simple residence of the opulent merchant of the period. Fersen lodged with Mr. Robert Stevens in the "New" Lane, and Lauzun with the widow of Dr. William Hunter and her three charming daughters, on the corner of Mary and Thames streets. Indeed through the tireless researches of the late John Austin Stevens, who, however, was much more than a local historian, the winter lodgings of all the officers of note have been established.

In one respect the American uniform, such as it was, was once again changed by direct order of Washington to honor the overseas Allies. From now on the Continental troops wore cockades of the three colors significant of the alliance between France, America, and Spain, for the Spanish King had joined his Bourbon cousin, who sat on the throne of France. Heraldized as the Cockade of the Triple Alliance in France, the emblem was greeted in Paris with great enthusiasm, and a few weeks later Paul Jones urged upon Commodore Barry that it should also be worn by the officers and men of our infant Navy.

How very divided and even antagonistic were the plans of the unaccustomed Allies at this early period of their co-operation is most clearly revealed by a letter which M. de Rochambeau sent on August 14 to M. de la Luzerne, the Minister of France then in Philadelphia. "After agreeing with me in all things," he wrote, "Lafayette upon his return to the Army (American) sends me a letter of 12 pages, surely instigated *de quelques mauvaises têtes*. He now proposes such extravagant things as taking Long Island and New York without the assistance of the Navy! He talks at length about the wishes of the Americans and stresses the efforts they have made in this Campaign and which, he says, they might not be able to renew when we may be in a position to take the offensive with them. Not a word or an order or even a suggestion to this effect from M. de Washington, who wrote me the same day and says not a word

⁸Fersen.

about this letter. The Admiral and I are extremely satisfied with all the communications we have received from the General, and indeed it is impossible to be more appreciative and grateful than we are.”*

In his reply, dated August 24, M. de la Luzerne pours oil on the troubled waters. “What M. de Lafayette has written you is purely the result of zeal and of a high courage which experience will moderate.”*

Lafayette was at this time undoubtedly riding a very high horse. He did not write it, but he frequently said to all and sundry that the French infantry were invincible, and he was inclined to suggest that he feared some strange lethargy had overtaken Rochambeau. As a result, as the letter to Luzerne clearly indicates, the French general was extremely put out with his impetuous and youthful countryman. Wisely, however, he mastered these feelings before he took pen in hand and wrote his answering letter of August 27 (1780):

Permit me, my dear Marquis, an old father, to reply to you, as to a tender son whom he loves and esteems highly. You must know me well enough to believe that I have no need of being spurred on to action and also that at my age, when I have reached a decision, based on military and diplomatic reasons, under the hard compulsion of circumstances, nothing in the way of suggestion can cause me to change my decision—only a positive order of my superior.

But such is not the case here. On the contrary I am most happy because in his dispatches my General tells me that my ideas are substantially in accord with his. It is always well to think the French invincible, my dear Marquis, but let me tell you a great secret which I have learnt from 40 years’ service with them. There are no troops more easily beaten when they have lost confidence in their leaders, and they lose this confidence immediately when they see that they are called upon to suffer because of an individual ambition.

Please believe that you will always find *dans votre vieux radoteur de père* some remains of vigor and activity. Please be assured also of my warmest friendship, and if I have brought to your attention the things which displeased me in your last letter, it was because I had concluded that the warmth of your heart and of your soul had for the moment gotten the better of your wisdom and judgment. Retain this last quality for the council chamber and reserve all of the first spirit for the moment when plans are to be put into execution. And please remember I am

*Archives Hist. Guerre, 3736.

always the old father, Rochambeau, who is talking to his dear son, La Fayette, whom he will love and esteem to his last breath.¹⁰

It was a masterly letter, and it squelched Lafayette for the time being, and yet the French general retained his friendship, valuable for many reasons, but especially so at this moment because of his close relations with Washington.

As is so often the case in international affairs, in the light of data and letters available now, the non-appearance of Washington at Newport is easily explained and would have been understood by the French general if the facts of the situation had been placed fully before him; this, however, seems never to have been done.

Washington wrote with perfect freedom in regard to the matter to Lafayette, but doubtless for some good reason the information was not sent on to Newport. Probably Lafayette thought it better that Rochambeau should learn of the depressing features of the situation gradually and not be struck with them in the face all at once, immediately upon his arrival. In these letters Washington told Lafayette that his presence in the American camp was "essential to keep any preparations in activity or even going on at all," and he urged Lafayette "to convince the Count with what pleasure I should hasten to meet him if it would not be injurious to our affairs."¹¹

It was now that Washington revealed his humanity by betraying for the first time his impatience with the dawdlers who, holding high office, encumbered the scene in so many of the states. He wrote that he had made definite proposals to the French for military co-operation and that "neither reason nor regard for decency would permit delay. The die is cast," he added, "and it remains with the states to fulfill their engagements, to preserve their credit, and support their independence or involve us in disgrace and defeat." He concluded, "I shall proceed on the supposition that they will ultimately consult their own interest and Honor and not suffer us to fail for want of means which it is evidently in their power to afford."

But "ultimately" was a word for which Rochambeau, and with reason, would demand that a fixed date be substituted, and that was what Washington was clearly unable to do. No wonder he avoided

¹⁰Rochambeau MS., MS. Division, Library of Congress.

¹¹Ford's *Writings of Washington*.

the French camp at Newport and only came at last to the meeting at Hartford with a reluctance which was not wholly concealed.

At Newport, of course, the original Americans, the Indians, came to pay their respects to Rochambeau. There were scores of them, and they were entertained and made much of from August 29 to September 2. Then they were sent back to their wigwams, delighted with the gay-colored blankets which had been brought over for them from France. One of the great chiefs put a rather difficult question to Rochambeau, but he met it very well.

"My father, it is astonishing to us that the King of France should send troops to protect Americans who are in rebellion against their father, the King of England." According to the official account, Rochambeau's reply was immediately forthcoming: "Your father, the King of France, protects the natural liberties which God has given to all men alike. The Americans were so weighted down with wrongs and burdens that they could no longer stand upright. Our King examined their complaints and, finding them just, supports their cause. Everywhere, we shall be the friends of their friends and the enemies of their enemies." Then he exhorted them to maintain complete neutrality in the campaign that was about to begin, and this they promised to do.¹²

According to the diary of Lieutenant Robertnier,¹³ these, to the French, most exotic visitors gave an interesting exhibition of their skill in games and dances, and also, he added, "of the way in which they scalp their enemies." In his memoirs, Lauzun gave the incident a cannibalistic touch. He tells that after the Indians had been wine and dined (to keep them from getting drunk, their wine was mixed with water), the general approached them and said, "I hope you have had a good dinner; I hope you like our food." The chief is reported to have answered, "Pretty good, pretty good, but it did not compare with the English cook we ate the other day."

Even after the reassuring words of M. de la Luzerne, Rochambeau was far from enthusiastic over the situation. In his first official report to Vergennes he stated that he was confronted by consternation and dismay in every quarter. He announced that paper money, all that Congress disposed of, had fallen to sixty for one, with but

¹²*Les Français en Amérique*. Balch, Paris, 1870.

¹³*Memoirs*.

few and most unwilling takers, and that for some time past Washington had had with him only about three thousand men. "The announcement of succor from France has afforded some encouragement, but of course the Tories, who are very numerous, give out that it is only a temporary assistance, like that of d'Estaing.

"You see, sir," continued the depressed general, "how important it is to act with vigor. The Whigs are pleased, but they say the King ought to have sent 20,000 men and 20 ships to drive the enemy from New York. They say that the country is infallibly ruined and that it is impossible to find a recruit to send to General Washington's army without giving him 100 'hard' dollars to engage for six months' service. They beseech His Majesty to assist them with all his strength. The war will be an expensive one. We pay even for our quarters and the land occupied by the camp. I shall, of course, use all possible order and economy. Send us troops and money, but do not depend upon these people nor upon their means. They have neither money nor credit. Their means of resistance are only momentary and called forth when they are attacked in their own homes. They then assemble for the moment of immediate danger and defend themselves."¹⁴

How desperate was the plight of Washington and the Army when Rochambeau arrived admits of no denial. The situation was painted in dark colors in all the letters from headquarters of the period. Writing to Lafayette, Washington said frankly: "Unless we secure arms and powder from the Count, we certainly can do nothing. With every effort," he added, "we shall fall short at least four thousand or five thousand arms and two hundred tons of powder."

Though rebuked, Lafayette was still a tireless letter writer. He bombarded the perplexed French general with communications that sorely tried his patience, and at the French headquarters there were outbreaks of temper, *bourrasques*, as Chastellux called them. The veteran of the Seven Years' War was tired of this stream of letters from his youthful compatriot. He wanted to see Washington "plain." He felt he was being held at arm's length, and as early as August 12, 1780, he wrote Lafayette:¹⁵

¹⁴It should be borne in mind that as he held a commission in the Continental Army the French always regarded Lafayette as an American officer.

¹⁵Archives Nat. Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

I am awaiting the orders of our General and I request the favor of an interview so that the Admiral and myself may receive from him, in personal contact, a definite plan. More would in this way be accomplished in a quarter of an hour than by any number of dispatches. In regard to what you say about the French force on Rhode Island being of no utility to the Americans, I would observe that as yet (1) I have not heard that it has hurt any of them (Americans), (2) that it would be well to reflect that the position of the French corps may have had something to do with the withdrawal of Clinton from the Continent where he was and his determination to confine himself on Long Island and at New York. While the French fleet is under close observation here by a superior naval force, the American coast is open and quiet, your privateers secure very important prizes, and your seagoing commerce has every liberty. It seems to me in this "douce position" I can well afford to await an augmentation of our marine, and also the troops which the King has assured me he would send. Finally, as I have not had a letter from France since my sailing, I cannot flatter myself that the Second Division is en route and is bringing me dispatches, but if it had been blockaded by superior forces, word would have been sent to me in some way from the coast of France. I fear the "Savannahs" [referring to d'Estaing's defeat there], and other events of that kind, of which I have seen so many in my life. Besides, I await the orders of my Generalissimo and I entreat him to accord the admiral and myself an interview.

This last sentence has direct reference to the statement of Lafayette that he had been given by General Washington "full powers" to represent him and that all negotiations were to pass through his hands. Nothing could have been less agreeable to Rochambeau than this arrangement.

No one more clearly appreciated the strained situation that was developing than did young Fersen of the Headquarters staff. Under date of October 16, writing to his father, he took a very gloomy view of the benefits of French intervention on the American shores of the Atlantic.

He said: "Our position here is a very disagreeable one. We are vegetating at the very door of the enemy in a most disastrous state of idleness and uncertainty, and while this should be attributed to our inferior numbers, it is a fact that our men are greatly fatigued, and that we are always obliged to be on the defensive. We are of no

possible aid to our allies. We cannot leave our island and our fleet cannot leave port without exposing us to the enemy, who, with superior forces in the way of men and ships, would certainly attack us and cut off our retreat to the mainland.

"Instead of helping the Americans, we are a drawback to them.¹⁶ We cannot reinforce their army as we are about a twelve-day march from them, separated by arms of the sea which are dangerous to cross in winter because of the huge blocks of floating ice. We are, in fact, a burden to our allies because our victualing makes provisions scarce for them. We are even an expense to them because by paying cash for our provisions we depreciate their paper money, and consequently the purveyors refuse to sell provisions for their paper money."

In fact, Fersen remains incorrigibly pessimistic, and as late as May 1781, only a few days before the active campaign began, he wrote again to his well-informed father in Sweden: "We have long enough been inactive and shamefully so. It would certainly have been wiser at the outset to have sent to America the money it has cost the King for our maintenance here. The Americans would have made better use of it. What was needed here was an army of, say, 15,000 men or nothing. I do hope we shall at last shake off this lethargy and become actively engaged."

Abbé Claude Robin, who marched with the Soissonais regiment only when he could not ride, explained more clearly perhaps than the other diarists why the French contingent under Rochambeau was received in some quarters so coldly. He wrote in his diary:

Before the war the Americans regarded the French as enslaved to despotism, a prey to all manner of superstitions and prejudices; as people quite incapable of solid and consistent effort, only occupied in such matters as curling their hair and painting their faces, and far from being respecters of the most sacred duties. These prejudices had been spread and emphasized by the English; then, at the beginning of the war, not a few things happened to confirm these unfavorable opinions. The great majority of the French who came to America when the rumor of revolution reached them were men who had lost their repu-

¹⁶For an understanding of the critical situation Washington's "now or never" despatch, his Macedonian cry to Paris for help, should be carefully weighed. See Appendix C.

tations and were wholly in debt and who generally presented themselves under false names and titles of nobility to which they had no manner of right. Under these false pretenses some of them obtained high rank in the American Army, also considerable advances in money, and then disappeared. The simplicity of the Americans and their lack of world experience made tricks of this nature very easy.

These prejudices were in full control when Rochambeau arrived and we all saw the extreme importance of dissipating them. High officers established the most strict discipline and the others were careful to exhibit that politeness and amenity which has always characterized the French nobility. Even our common soldiers became mild, careful, and moderate, and in the course of our long sojourn not a single complaint was brought against them. Our young nobles who, because of their birth and fortune and their residence at court, should have been most attached to dissipation, to luxury, and all the *appareils de la grandeur*, were the very first to give an example of complete simplicity and to accept the requirements of the frugal life. They always showed themselves most affable to their new neighbors, quite as though they had never come in contact with any other kind of men; and when this line of conduct had been maintained for a few weeks a complete revolution in the spirit of the people was noticed. Even the Tories and Royalists could not help loving the French.

There is ample evidence to prove that, at this time, even after suspending the expensive courier service between the two camps, the Commander in Chief of the American Army and the gentlemen of his staff were absolutely without the kind of money that people were willing to take in payment for goods and services. There is some reason to believe that the apparent reluctance to proceed to the Hartford conference, now proposed, was due to this untoward cash stringency and the belief that the entertainment of distinguished French officers would run into high figures. What must have been the relief, therefore, when it was learned that the state of Connecticut had decided to pay all the expenses out of a treasury which was not overfilled.¹⁷ This very creditable order still stands in the state's records, and should not be overlooked.

"Agreeable to the orders of His Excellency (Governor Trumbull),

¹⁷When the bills were called for, the impoverished Continentals were informed that the governor of Connecticut had given orders that they should pay nothing in that state "but should be at free cost."

345 pounds are to be drawn from the treasury for the reception and entertainment of General Washington and the French general and admiral at Hartford."

Fersen was by far the best reporter of things seen during these early days of the French Army in America—at least so it seems to me. Writing again to his father in Sweden he stated: "The discipline of our men is admirable. It fairly astonishes the natives who are accustomed to being pillaged by the English troops and their own. This is a charming country with a superb climate. It would be a very happy country if it might enjoy a long period of peace and if the parties by which it is now divided did not invite upon it the fate of Poland and that of so many other republics." . . . Fersen also deplored the failure of the Second Division to arrive, and having heard that it was blockaded in the harbor of Brest, he admitted "the Garrison of Newport begins to be very dull and depressed."

When at last the conference was decided upon, Fersen had the good fortune to be selected as the aide Rochambeau sent ahead to arrange the details in Hartford and so had the "great joy and honor," as he rightly considered it, of being the first officer of the staff to see Washington. He immediately sent off this pen portrait of the American liberator to his father:

"His face is handsome and majestic but at the same time kind and gentle, corresponding completely with his moral qualities. He looks like a hero; he is very cold and says little but he is frank and polite. There is a sadness in his countenance which does not misbecome him and indeed renders his face more interesting." Fersen did not pretend to know what happened during the momentous interview that followed. He said only: "Washington, Lafayette, and Rochambeau looked pleased when they parted," and then he added with Swedish caution, "At least they say they were pleased." . . .

The long-heralded and long-delayed meeting took place on September 27, and we now know it was not so happy or so harmonious as the historians of the day would have us believe. Washington, of course, was, and rightly so, greatly disappointed as to the numbers of the French "auxiliaries" that had come to his assistance. There they were, cooped up in Rhode Island, four infantry regiments, several batteries of artillery, and Lauzun's irregulars, and a few warships, completely blockaded by the British fleet, not daring to ven-

ture out of the Narragansett waters. This "succor" was not one third of what had been asked for, it was not one half of what had been promised, and certainly it was a poor substitute for *les forces formidables de la Maison de Bourbon* whose early arrival had been announced in such grandiloquent terms.

It must also be admitted that Rochambeau was not without grievances. Wherever he looked the shortcomings of the Americans were manifest. The Continental Army had sunk to what was little more than a camp guard, and the militia, when wanted, had generally scattered to the four winds. In the most courteous manner in the world the French general was soon putting some very awkward questions: "When would the states of the Confederacy send in their long-promised quotas of men?" And then the suggestion: "Was it true that the Americans had now decided to rest on their oars and let the French do the fighting?" This was certainly the way things looked to some of the French military observers, and yet they were evidently trying to view the critical situation in an impartial manner and to apportion the discredit for recent failures with fairness between both parties to the alliance.

All Washington could do in the circumstances was to exhibit the repeated and urgent requests which, under authority from Congress, he had sent out to the states, calling for men, supplies, and equipment, and also perhaps the promising replies that had been received; but when Rochambeau asked for performance, or inquired as to the prospect of performance, that was a different matter and Washington had not learned to lie—not even for his country.

It is also true that some of the French officers thought that Washington was almost a monomaniac on the subject of attacking New York, of tackling the British where they were strongest. It was much like *le cas Pershing* in 1918, when the American general was always talking about "open warfare" and all the French could see was a great fortress of steel and concrete confronting them, extending from Switzerland to the North Sea. To Washington, New York was the stranglehold of the British over the colonies. He wanted to break it, and then he was a fighting man. He had been driven out of New York bag and baggage years before, and now, for many months, he had been planning, dreaming as some thought, of turning the tables on the conquerors, of winning the return trick.

Lafayette, who was living at the American headquarters on terms of closest intimacy with Washington, wrote to Rochambeau at this time: "New York is in every respect an object preferable to any other. This city is the pivot on which turn the operations of the enemy and upon which rest any hopes which the King of England can still entertain. In a word, it is clear that an expedition against New York would be the most glorious and the most advantageous to France and America, the most desired by the two nations, and in a certain sense the only one that is practicable."¹⁸

Of course the most bitter moment of the conference came with the announcement that Guichen, with the French West Indian fleet, was not coming. Rightly or wrongly, he had been confidently expected to appear off the American coast, once his operations in the Caribbean were concluded. In alliance with him Washington had hoped to attack the British both on land and sea. In fact, it was to arrange the plans for this co-operation that the conference at Hartford had been called. And now? Well, Guichen was only obeying his orders, to escort the great convoy of merchantmen, which had been assembling in Santo Domingo for months, to give these valuable cargoes safe escort to Europe. French and Spanish commerce demanded that this be done. It was a case of "business as usual," and it was altogether most disheartening to the Americans. Some thought it a "raw" deal and said so, and Rochambeau and the French fell still further from popular favor. Indeed by popular orators the French general was frequently sent to that limbo where poor d'Estaing had been consigned two years before.

Yet, after a careful scrutiny of the situation and long discussion as to its most urgent phases, it would seem that a tentative understanding was reached at the meeting. What the plan was is not very clear, and it does not matter very much what it was, as within twenty-four hours it became obsolete by force of changed circumstances. The conference adjourned when the news reached Washington and Rochambeau of the arrival in New York of Admiral Rodney with twenty-one ships. Even if he came now, Guichen had nothing at his disposal to counterbalance these reinforcements, and the appeals for assistance to him might just as well have been thrown into the wastepaper basket. Both generals now returned to their re-

¹⁸Doniol, 5, H 356.

spective posts to face, with what equanimity they could muster, the dark winter months.

How dark they were to be Washington at least could not realize until, on reaching West Point, he learned of Arnold's treason and how nearly successful he had been in his purpose of betraying his country and his comrades and of turning over the citadel and the stores at that vital place to the British. Not the least of the important information which Arnold conveyed to Clinton was the growing dissatisfaction among the people of the colonies over the fruits, the bitter fruits, of the French alliance, and the anxiety of many as to the service of foreign troops, even as allies, on American soil. Much of this agitation was fomented and subsidized by the British secret-service funds, but the feeling existed and it was growing.

In these dark days (early October) Luzerne left Philadelphia to visit his countrymen in Rhode Island, and on the way tarried for several days at Washington's camp.¹⁹ The Minister was an able man and an old soldier, and what he saw inspired unusually emphatic dispatches to his government. He insisted that the Second Division must come, or Guichen must be ordered to join de Ternay at Newport. He made it quite plain that the present French fleet was entirely outclassed by Arbuthnot's vessels in both numbers and armament, and that with the addition of Rodney's ships to the British fleet aggressive operations were entirely out of the question.

Luzerne then went on to Newport, where he found, strangely enough, the French admiral and the French general in perfect agreement with his appreciation of the situation. Quite separate but concurring dispatches were drafted and started immediately to France on a swift sailer. M. de la Pérouse, who was to become such a famous navigator, carried the bad news to the head of the Navy. Rochambeau selected his son, the viscount, to carry his complaints, and he made the young man learn them by heart so that in case of capture, if the actual dispatches had to be thrown overboard, the bad news might still be conveyed to Paris.

What the feelings of the Commander in Chief were, as the year 1780, upon which he had entered with such high hopes, came to a close, was revealed in his review of the situation which follows:

"Disappointed of the Second Division of the French troops, but

¹⁹Doniol, *Participation*.

more especially in the expected naval superiority, which was the pivot upon which everything turned, we have been compelled to spend an inactive campaign, after a flattering prospect at the opening of it, and vigorous struggles on our part to make it a decisive one."²⁰

And even when 1781 was well under way, the little-known, or at least rarely noted, letter, which Washington wrote at this time to Mesheck Ware, president of New Hampshire, indicated that he saw no bright spots on the horizon, nothing that could be hailed as a harbinger of better days. It reads: "The aggravated calamities and distresses that have resulted to the soldiers from the total want of pay for nearly twelve months, the want of clothing at a severe season, and not infrequently want of provisions, are beyond description.

"I give it decidedly as my opinion that it is vain to think an army can be kept together much longer under such a variety of suffering as ours has experienced, and that unless some immediate and Spirited measures are adopted to furnish at least three months' pay to the troops in money, which will be of some value to them, and at the same time ways and means are devised to clothe and feed them better (more regularly, I mean) than they have been, the worst that can befall us may be expected."

It would not be fair to Rochambeau or to the French chroniclers of the American campaign if we should cull all the nose-gays they shower upon Washington and pass over what was in the end their considered judgment of the general, whom Washington, with justice, called his "fellow laborer in the cause of liberty." From time to time, it is true, there crop out from these day-to-day notes words of impatience and even of blame for their leader's lack of activity, but when the end is reached, and what he had in mind is understood, they one and all burst out in a chorus of warm approval.

When they parted, Cloisen devoted a few very eloquent words to the great man he had served as aide for so many fatiguing days. "I can say," he wrote, "that he carried away with him the regrets, the attachment, the respect, and the veneration of all our Army. All in him betokens a great man with an excellent heart. Enough good will never be said of him."

²⁰Washington MS., Library of Congress.

No improvement can be made upon the eulogy which the Marquis de Ségur, who served under him in America, devoted to the memory of Rochambeau when he came to write his memoirs years after his general had passed from the scene: "He seemed to have been purposely created to understand Washington and to be understood by him and to serve with Republicans. A friend of order, of laws, of liberty, his example more even than his authority obliged us scrupulously to respect the rights, properties, and customs of our Allies."

The want of enthusiasm which marked the reception of Rochambeau and his men was due not only to the smallness of the force that he brought (which was generally recognized as wholly insufficient to perform the tasks which the situation imposed), but may be ascribed in large part, at least, to the very poignant memory of the recent expedition under Admiral d'Estaing which had failed signally both to drive the British from Rhode Island and to wrest Savannah from the British force that occupied it. Rochambeau immediately set to work to remove as quickly as possible these impressions which were anything but stimulating to American morale and a great handicap to the future co-operation of the Allied forces.

Most fortunately for the French general, who had no personal knowledge as to the details of the expedition of his unfortunate predecessor, there came with him the Vicomte de Noailles, a brother-in-law of Lafayette, lieutenant colonel of the Soissonais regiment, who had been with d'Estaing and so was a living witness to the difficulties which the admiral had not been able to overcome. Noailles, a gallant young soldier destined to play a notable part in the campaign of the following year, was a loyal adherent of the admiral general whose misfortunes he had shared without losing faith in his integrity and competence.

There is much evidence to show that Rochambeau upon landing charged Noailles with the duty of combating what was in fact a form of *défaitiste* propaganda against d'Estaing and the French, based almost entirely upon the angry utterances of General Sullivan, now relegated to Congress, who had been in command of the American force that had co-operated, or failed to co-operate, with the French in the attempt made to drive the British from Rhode Island.

The arguments advanced by Noailles in his campaign of counter-

propaganda have not survived in the French chronicles of the long winter in Newport, but there is much reason to believe that he was successful in removing the stigma which had been attached to this unfortunate officer's name (he who had been one of the first advocates of the American cause in France) and of bringing American opinion around to the viewpoint of Washington, who had maintained from the first (in his letters to Lafayette and to d'Estaing himself) that no greater charge could be brought against him than that of being unlucky; that Sullivan, with whom he had to co-operate, was exceedingly temperamental and without experience in the command of troops, and that the "sea dogs" who commanded the French ships did not always give loyal support to the "land" officer who, to their disgust, had been placed over them.

In default of a direct statement from Noailles as to what steps he took to combat the prejudices which the American Army, as well as the civilian population, shared as to the hazards and the difficulties of co-operation with the French, it is perhaps permissible to assume that he made use of the same arguments that are contained in the final report of d'Estaing to the Minister of the Marine—all the more so because it is held, by those who ought to know, that this report was drawn up by Noailles. Certainly there is no doubt but that the report is in the handwriting of d'Estaing's loyal, and at times even enthusiastic, aide.

Though greatly condensed, the following outline of this forgotten report will at least indicate the French version of the unfortunate affair and present the situation in its true light. The French fleet, commanded by d'Estaing, an Army officer, as was not infrequently the custom of the period, reached Delaware Bay on July 8. As the French ships rode very deep in the water, they had to anchor a long way off shore, and it was soon apparent that they had not been chosen very intelligently for the work that lay before them. D'Estaing was expected to attack the British in New York, but it was now a question whether he could get anywhere near his objective.

Seafaring men were assembled on the French flagship for a war council, but to the disgust of the admiral general they one and all declined to bring the larger vessels of the French fleet inside Sandy Hook, much less through the Narrows. D'Estaing sailed for New

York in the hope of picking up more daring or perhaps more reckless pilots.

Toward the end of July, while the whole French fleet hove to off Sandy Hook, there was held on board the flagship a great conclave of pilots. Again they were opposed to the plan that d'Estaing had at heart. They announced that they would only attempt to bring the French vessels over the bar, and so enable them to close with the British fleet "when a northeast wind coincided with a strong spring tide." This meant a delay of nearly a year, and of course there was no certainty that even at that distant date wind and tide would happily coincide. Frustrated in his main purpose, the French admiral sailed for Newport. Here was deep water, a British squadron, and a small land force. It was hoped that if he could but destroy the British afloat the Americans would easily dispose of the land force.

The French fleet blockaded Narragansett Bay and plans were discussed with General Sullivan. In a few days, thanks to the energy of d'Estaing's lieutenant, Suffren (who began his career in the "galleys of Religion" in the eastern Mediterranean, and who before the war was over was to inflict such heavy losses on the British fleets in the East Indies), he captured several vessels and drove three or four more on shore.

To prevent further successes of the French, aid was summoned from New York, and on the eleventh of August Admiral Howe appeared in the offing with his fleet and d'Estaing sailed out to give him battle. The strong winds that prevailed developed into a gale, and two hours later the *Languedoc*, the admiral's flagship, had lost a mast and was entirely without rudder control. In the storm that then came on to blow, the French ships were widely scattered and the *Renown* of the British squadron and a number of other light vessels from the enemy squadron surrounded her. Undoubtedly the French flagship was in a desperate plight until the morning of the fourteenth when, most fortunately, several ships of the French squadron hove in sight and came to her assistance.

For several days the gale continued with unabated vigor and reached unheard-of proportions. It was the "French storm" of which the Narragansett fisherfolk still retain an awe-stricken memory. At last d'Estaing made for Boston and had the good fortune to cast anchor there, followed by most of his ships, on the

twenty-seventh. On the thirtieth Admiral Howe appeared off the port but did not run in close, and, seeing that the harbor was well defended by land batteries, he turned about and ran for New York to refit.

The claim of Noailles in this report (which is probably his) is that d'Estaing had to go out and give battle, and that at the time he slipped his cables and went out the chances were favorable to success, and that but for the unseen factor, the unpredictable and unseasonable storm, he would have inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy. Further, he insisted, the moment the fleet went out Sullivan should have withdrawn with the American force, largely militia, from the island.

If the sea battle had been successful the British garrison in Newport would have been isolated and compelled to capitulate without more ado. Sullivan should have withdrawn to a safe position on the mainland and there awaited further developments of the situation. However, he loitered and only made good his retreat to the mainland on the night of the thirtieth, after the sharp fight at Quaker Hill, where his losses were heavy.

Perhaps only one thing is certain in this confused state of affairs: Sullivan made his escape none too soon. General Clinton, with ample reinforcements and a light squadron, had arrived at Newport to support General Pigot and was placing his men in position. In his almost frantic letter or memorandum of censure upon the French (Greene and many other generals signed it), General Sullivan protested against the sudden departure of d'Estaing and other measures taken by him, "which stain the honor of France, are contrary to the interests of His Most Christian Majesty, are most pernicious to the prosperity of the United States, and an outrageous offense upon the alliance between the two nations."²¹

There is also a letter from Lafayette which not only showed that at this time he defended the course of d'Estaing (to whom he was writing), but furnished interesting information which helped to explain the situation. It reads: "I confess that the general consternation that followed [the departure of the fleet] was much greater than I expected or could have believed. It was, of course, impossible to foresee the effect which your departure would exert upon the

²¹Archives. Nat. Marine, B4, 146.

spirits of the Americans." A day or two later, though he had signed the memorandum of censure, General Greene was repentant, and wrote a letter to the French admiral which is at once an explanation and an apology. He apparently had authorized the use of his signature without examining the document very closely. He now joined Washington, who lost no time in reprimanding Sullivan for the language of the memorandum. When his opinion as to the best course to pursue in the circumstances was asked by Congress, M. Gerard, the French Minister, suggested that the censorious memorandum be suppressed or at least be held "most confidential," and as this was done, its exact terms, at least, did not reach the general public.

Unhappily, as Noailles justly states, the misleading information upon which the memorandum was based, "through the discharged militiamen, ran like wildfire through the country, creating a very dangerous situation, undermining the alliance, and making anything like military co-operation impossible."²²

A few days later there was a riot directed against the French in Charleston, South Carolina, and before the French sailors could embark, some three or four were killed; on the eighth occurred the fracas in Boston in which a French naval officer, the unfortunate young Saint Sauveur, lost his life.

These incidents for a time threatened to shake the good understanding which had been established so recently between the colonists and their allies from overseas. Very sensational accounts of what happened were circulated throughout the country, and the royal and loyalist press in New York did all they could to add to the outburst of racial feeling which followed. The Boston incident is best described in the sober language of the minutes of the Massachusetts House of Delegates.

Apparently on the evening in question some insults were offered to French naval bakers in Boston (landed from the fleet) by "unknown riotous persons." In endeavoring to quell the incipient riot the Chevalier de Saint Sauveur received a wound on the head from which he died a few days later. Distorted versions of what had hap-

²²General Greene's first comment on the affair is conveyed in his letter to Washington. He says, "His [d'Estaing's] departure ruined our operations. It struck such a panic among the militia and the volunteers that they began to desert in shoals."

pened swept through the villages, and rumors very unfriendly to the French were quickly accepted as truth by many members of the militia, who had returned from the Rhode Island operations with anything but a kindly feeling toward the Allies or appreciation of the advantages of co-operation with them.

Fortunately the House of Delegates in extraordinary session acted quickly and energetically. Its members unanimously resolved to show their "detestation of the Perpetrators and Abettors of the horrid deed, and out of respect to the memory of the deceased" to erect a monument over his grave and to place upon it such "inscription as His Excellency the Count d'Estaing shall order." A distinguished citizen, Colonel Thomas Dawes, was selected to see that the monument was erected. Unfortunately it was not until more than a century later, on May 24, 1917, over six weeks after we had entered upon World War I, that this high resolve of the Massachusetts delegates was carried out. Undoubtedly the murder of the unfortunate young naval officer was in part the result of labor troubles, but the ill feeling against the French, that Sullivan and his friends had so unwisely encouraged, was undoubtedly a contributing factor in the situation which was a cause of great anxiety to all right-thinking Americans and Frenchmen.

Sullivan had been censured for the tone of his letter of protest, and justly so in view of all the circumstances I think, but there is a communication from him to Washington which does afford some grounds, at least, for the plea of extenuating circumstances which has been made in his behalf. It reads: "The reason for drawing up the protest was this: the Count himself wished to remain with us but was, by his Captains, overruled in Council. To have deviated from the advice of his Council would have been attended with ill consequences for him in case of misfortune. It was supposed that our protest might justify him in taking the part agreeable to his own sentiments and those of the co-operating Army (American). He has offered to come on (from Boston) with his land forces and do everything that I may request of him and his troops, but the step has become unnecessary."

As a matter of fact the step had become impossible. Sullivan's militia had dispersed and gone to their homes, the English in Newport had been largely reinforced from New York, and the oppor-

tunity was lost. Washington was greatly disappointed and for once showed it. "If the garrison of that place [Newport]," he wrote, "consisting of nearly six thousand men, had been captured, and there was in appearance at least a hundred to one in favor of it, it would have given the finishing blow to British pretensions of sovereignty over this country, and would, I am persuaded, have hastened the departure of the troops in New York as fast as their canvass wings could carry them away."

As he undoubtedly had it, as far as the American public opinion was concerned, we must give the last word to John Trumbull, who was very energetic in circulating his view of the unfortunate affair throughout the colonies. "The French fleet was drawn off from a well-selected situation," he wrote, "by a clever manœuvre of Lord Howe the very day the American Army had landed on the island. The fleets in action were separated by a severe gale and the French, more damaged by the tempest than by the enemy, put into Boston to refit, and General Sullivan was left to pursue the enterprise with the Army alone. He advanced with his force to the town in admirable order but saw that it was to no purpose as long as the English could get supplies by water, and as the French fleet would not resume its station, the enterprise was abandoned."

Neither the intelligent attitude of the Massachusetts authorities nor yet the noble letter of Washington thanking d'Estaing in generous terms for what he had tried to do, stemmed the rising tide of indignation among the colonists against the French. The Sullivan letter was widely circulated where it would do the most harm, and the most uncomplimentary remarks of John Trumbull were apparently quoted in every New England hamlet. Trumbull, who later became the notable painter of Revolutionary scenes, was at the time entirely ignorant of military affairs, but unfortunately his views found wide acceptance. And he never reversed them. Years later, when he came to write his memoirs, he stated that on this occasion the French left the Americans in the lurch.

Perhaps the final explanation of the unfortunate affair, which dashed for the time being the high hopes that had been placed on the military value of the alliance, is that human nature, being what it is, and the weather being so often unresponsive to the boatswain's whistle, perfect co-operation between land and sea forces in a joint

movement against an enemy's stronghold is an ideal that has been rarely realized. This pessimism holds even when officers and men of the co-operating forces speak the same language, as was the case with but little better results at Santiago de Cuba in 1898, and off the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915.

Most fortunately the weather that had contributed to the dangerous situation now helped to clear it up. The gale, continuing with unexampled violence all along the New England coast, scattered the British vessels blockading Boston, and on November 4 d'Estaing made his escape both from the enemy and his unfriendly allies. Though buffeted about by high seas for more than a month, he arrived at Fort Royal, Martinique, on December 9 with all his heavier ships.

Throughout the winter he fought the British in the West Indies with varying fortune, and in the following August he was again called to the American coast, but to a far different quarter. In his report to the Minister of the Marine, he explained that letters came to him from the French consul in Charleston, South Carolina, and from General Lincoln, whom he calls the "Governor" of the Carolinas. "They made plain to me," he said, "that the American cause was in great peril and that all their hopes were based on my early arrival." In these circumstances d'Estaing decided to sail for the American coast. "If only to show ourselves," he wrote; "even that will have an effect of the very greatest importance, I am assured." Early in September he was off the coast of Georgia, and as a preliminary step he landed three hundred men on Tybee Island "separated from Savannah by creeks and swamps."

As to this land fight in front of Savannah, Noailles' testimony was even more valuable, as here he was in his native element and indeed had been placed in command of one of the three divisions of the French that advanced to the attack. The French fleet anchored in Tybee Roads and there awaited the coming of the Americans who had promised to join them.²³ They came under the command of

²³General Lincoln, who commanded the American contingent, had with him only six hundred Continentals and about four hundred militia, while the French force numbered nearly four thousand. There is some reason to believe that Lincoln was in favor of a more methodical approach to the enemy's works, but, as usual, the French were pressed for time and most anxious to return to the West Indian scene before the British were aware of their absence.

General Lachlan McIntosh, who is famous for having killed Button Gwinnett, the Signer, in a duel.

In some way, doubtless through a deserter, General Prevost, who commanded the British force, seems to have been fully advised of the plans of the Allies. When the battle opened, with the advance on the Spring Hill redoubt, the Americans found too late that it was strongly held. Pulaski, the gallant Polish volunteer, with a few mounted men arrived from Augusta and joined in the fight. He went immediately to the front and was struck down with a small cannon ball "because he had placed himself where he should not have been," wrote Noailles.

D'Estaing received two wounds early in the engagement but would not suffer himself to be removed from the field. Three times the French were swept from the open ground in front of the redoubt and three times the young officers brought them back. "The American regulars, who should not be confounded with their militia, under heavy fire showed a fine spirit and conducted themselves in a superior manner throughout the engagement. But they were not in the numbers we had been given to expect," wrote Noailles. Then follow the only words in the nature of criticism of the leadership of the expedition which the report contains: "When he saw that he had been deceived as to the number of men that could be opposed to him, our leader consulted his own courage and his desire to conform to the King's instructions which were to demonstrate to the Americans that his firm intention was to co-operate with them in recovering their liberty."

In the end the French withdrew in good order but with a heavy casualty list. One hundred and eighty-four men had been killed, of whom sixteen were officers, and four hundred and fifty-eight wounded, of whom forty-seven were officers. A very large percentage of the wounded died, and the total loss was three times that later sustained in the successful siege of Yorktown. In a few days, seeing that a renewal of the attack gave no promise of success, the French withdrew to their ships and the Americans retired on Charleston. So it was that the prestige of the alliance suffered a serious setback in the South as well as in the North long before Rochambeau arrived.

Let us now return to the situation in New England;

Why the dashing Lauzun, the conqueror of the fair sex, and his

no-less-invincible hussars, were at this time sent out from Newport to Lebanon in the "Colony of Connecticut" is not made very plain in the French official records. There is, it is true, a suggestion that some unworthy sutlers in Providence were inclined to profiteer in the matter of horse fodder, but the moment this rumor reached their ears the best people of the Providence Plantations got together and took concerted action to stop the threatening scandal. Prices were adjusted and handsome quarters were made ready for the officers and suitable lodgings for the men but, when everything had been arranged, Rochambeau proved obdurate and the original order of banishment "into the forests of Connecticut" was maintained. In his complaint I think Lauzun reveals the reason of his exile. "As I spoke English," he wrote (unfortunately Rochambeau could not), "I had to look after an infinite number of frightfully annoying but necessary details." He added, "I did not leave Newport without regrets. There I found myself in a most agreeable society." There is ample evidence in the Newport letters of the period to indicate that the regret was mutual.

For a time the Beau Sabreur lamented his lot, but for only a few, a very few, days. "Siberia alone can be compared to Lebanon," he wrote. "It is composed of a few cottages scattered in the midst of a vast forest." But when Rochambeau proved inexorable he made the best of a bad business, and it was soon apparent that the "peasants" of Connecticut had learned to admire him much as did the society folk of Newport. The fact seems to have been that the French general had not wanted Lauzun to come out with him in the first place. Rochambeau, who had lived in rough camps for nearly forty years, thought the Versailles favorite a coxcomb and a "carpet knight." He consented to his coming only when the Queen, for reasons of her own, had insisted. Certain only it is that Rochambeau kept the court soldier at a distance until that day at Yorktown months later when, convinced of his mistake, he folded the brave rider in his arms and gave him the accolade in the presence of both armies.

The legion, four hundred men and the same number of horses and two companies of foot soldiers, left Newport in tears on November 10 for Lebanon. All the chroniclers of the departure agree that each soldier of the legion "wore a mustache."²⁴ Be this as it

²⁴Stone, *Our French Allies*, Providence, 1854.

may, in a few days they were in "le Baron." Soldierlike, Lauzun and his gay riders made the best of their exile. Forage was cheap and also more human food. Lauzun became an adept in "squirrel hunting," a diversion which, he said, "is much in fashion in this country," and soon he was cheered by a visit from his friend Chevalier de Chastellux, academician and world traveler, who, fortunately for us, now left his troops to drillmasters and toured the colonies with sharp, understanding eyes and a ready pen. He came quite a bit out of his way to console and cheer his friend whose gay conversation he enjoyed. In his journal he wrote:

"On returning from the Chase (that squirrel hunt!) I dined at the Duke de Lauzun's with Governor Trumbull (of this state) and General Huntington. The former lives at Lebanon and the other had come from Norwich. You have only to represent to yourself this small old man in the antique dress of the first settlers in the colony approaching a table surrounded by twenty Hussar officers and without either disconcerting himself or losing anything of his formal stiffness, pronouncing in a loud voice a long prayer in the form of a Benedicite." From which I conclude Governor Trumbull said grace, but of course Chastellux, the world traveler, dramatizes the incident.

The hussars were professional soldiers of many nationalities and, after the French, the Poles were the most numerous. Their previous campaign had been in the jungles of Senegal, and they were not slow in appreciating the climate and the beauties of the Connecticut hills. Here they stayed until late in June, when they galloped away to join up with Washington in northern Westchester. Governor Trumbull was on hand to wish the detachment Godspeed and he was also of practical assistance. Together with the gentlemen of his council he issued a proclamation commanding his fellow citizens "not to raise by a single cent the price of provisions during the passage of the French troops." It is pleasant to be able to add in the words of Rochambeau that the "inhabitants obeyed this injunction so generously that each mess was able to add every evening to the common allowances every kind of provisions at a low price."

Whether it should be ascribed to the fierce mustachios that they wore, or the generous way in which they spent their hard money, or the prancing of their war horses, it is certain that the memory of

the French is more alive today in Lebanon than in any other of the French camps. A bare field is still pointed out as the place where the "barracks" stood, and several wells they dug are still giving water. The villagers, when they gather on the village green but little changed if at all from the epic days, still speak of the passing of the French, as though it occurred last summer. The descendants of the men Lauzun called "my good peasants" still assemble on summer evenings about the old farmhouse, which they call the "war office," where the French officers foregathered. It was the store of Governor Trumbull's father. It is true that Alden's Tavern, where the light horsemen quenched their thirst, is gone, but everyone knows where it stood on the east side of the green.

The story is still told that the hussars rode up to the bar on horseback and after a hard gallop would give their mounts a taste of New England rum, though for themselves they preferred the West Indian article which cost more. It is certain that the horsemen threw their money about recklessly, as horsemen will, for when the tavern was demolished years ago many strange coins that had slipped through the flooring were unearthed and are religiously treasured. Rochambeau himself related an anecdote illustrating the excellent relations which Lauzun, the darling of the Versailles court, soon established with his "peasants." Asked by one of them what business his father was engaged in, he replied: "My father is not in business, but I have an uncle who is a maréchal [the Duke de Biron, Marshal of France], literally farrier or horseshoer." "Indeed," replied the villager, "not so bad. There are worse trades than that."

III

Newport—A Winter Camp

THE PROBLEM of housing the French troops in Newport, now that winter was approaching, presented many difficulties, just as M. Gerard, the alert French Minister, had warned Rochambeau that it would. The general described in his memoirs how he solved these problems and at the same time shed much light on local conditions. "Here," he wrote, "each individual holds his own property in such sacred veneration that General Washington's army throughout the summer had no other residence than their camp, and for the winter was obliged to make shift with wooden huts which the soldiers built for themselves in the forests."

He stated that this plan could not be pursued in Rhode Island because during the years their occupation lasted the British had cut down all the trees. Fortunately for the French, if not for the inhabitants of Newport, in one way or another the British had also destroyed many of the houses, and many more were left in such plight they could not be occupied. Rochambeau saw the opportunity of putting his men under something more substantial than canvas, and offered to repair the houses at the expense of the Army treasury provided his men were permitted to occupy them as long as they remained. He announced also that the officers, while billeted with the inhabitants who had suitable accommodations, were to pay for their quarters. Both proposals were accepted by the American authorities, and they seem to have worked out to the satisfaction of all concerned.

It was in this month, December 1780, that the finances of the

American Army reached their lowest ebb. In the Army chest there was literally not even "a continental." Washington wrote to Lafayette that he had had to withdraw his last courier service of dragoons, which had maintained communications between the Hudson and Newport, and that in the future he would send his dispatches to Lauzun at Lebanon to be forwarded. In explanation of this step he wrote: "There not being so much money in the hands of the Quarter-Master General as would bear the expense of an Express to Rhode Island."

In these circumstances Rochambeau went into winter quarters and left nothing undone to make his troops as comfortable as possible. He planned to remain in and about Narragansett Bay until the late spring and then become active if the long-awaited, long-promised reinforcements arrived. If——!

Apparently, even in those days, Newport was an expensive place. He wrote to Paris: "Money goes, money goes. It would not be wise to send more troops until the Spring, when they can be utilized. As long as the Army is here, we consume 560,000 Francs per month."¹

There was no improvement with the new year, and the French intelligence officers grew anxious. More than one of them commented on the lassitude which possessed the whole country. They saw how hard it was for Washington to recruit men, how difficult it was for him to hold those who were already with the colors. One day, they reported, the generalissimo would think he could rely on fifteen thousand men; then, overnight, this host would apparently melt to a beggarly three thousand. Worst news of all was the disaffection of some of the soldiers. How a number of units of the Continental Army were in revolt is told very soberly and without the least exaggeration in the French archives. How the Pennsylvania Line, in open mutiny, marched upon Philadelphia with Williams, an English deserter, in command, was related without comment. Also how they menaced with death their own gallant officers, Wayne, Lafayette, St. Clair, Knox, and Laurens. Hardly was this outbreak quelled when the New Jersey Line followed the bad example. Many misled men were shot down, undoubtedly the morale of many other units was shaken, and the value of paper money reached the vanishing point.

¹Rochambeau Papers, MS. Div., Library of Congress.

When Washington, in this extremity, decided to send his aide, John Laurens, to the Court of Versailles to lay bare the distressing, almost hopeless situation, Rochambeau comments, "An excellent choice, but Congress sends him [Laurens] too late to have any influence on the next campaign, which will be decided before he arrives."² That was not a good prophecy, but it can easily be matched in the dispatches of at least a score of Allied generals who in our day were so busy with planning for the campaign in 1919, which was never to be fought, that they could not see what was actually happening in the summer and fall of 1918.

The French general encouraged all manner of social and sport activities to combat the boredom and the weariness of the long winter of watchful waiting. Many of the French officers were mounted now, and according to some accounts they were often seen riding about the island in gay cavalcades, some accompanied by "running footmen," and it is added that this was "an ancient custom of the old nobility."³

But dancing was the principal diversion. Rochambeau is reported to have said that as the officers and men could not march, owing to the heavy snowfall, they must dance, and there is every reason to believe that the young ladies of Newport, Providence, and Bristol were very willing partners. Indeed the general had been in his quarters at the Vernon house only a few weeks when he built a pavilion that was known as the "French Hall." Here were given the dinners and dances, and here they received their friends. "It was here," says Blanchard contemptuously, he was evidently not a dancing man, "that they had their minuets and *contredanses*."

The dancing pavilion was the cause of the only friction between the general and the Americans. William Vernon, the owner of the property, who was in Boston at the time, wrote to his son, "I understand General Rochambeau had not your leave for building an assembly room in the garden. I can't think it polite of him." The matter was ultimately arranged, but it crops up again and drags on for some time. Even in 1781 the vigilant son is writing to the father, who was still in Boston: "I believe the General takes as much care of the house as the Frenchmen generally do, but it will sustain more

²Rochambeau Papers.

³Stone.

damage than from a family living in it for years. The floors will be entirely spoiled, and I expect they will make a great waste in the house if they do not ruin it."

When the campaign was nearing a close, the delicate matter was adjusted in a manner honorable to all concerned. Rochambeau paid four hundred and fifty hard dollars to have the intruding pavilion removed from the garden, and Mr. Vernon gave him a receipted bill for the rent, although he declined to receive any money.

The Chevalier de Chastellux entertained a great deal in the Maudsley House on Spring Street. His little suppers were famous in Newport for years to come. Baron Viomesnil lived a somewhat more secluded life in the Manton House. Indeed where they all lived and where they were quartered is carefully reported in the billeting list that is still to be seen in the museum of Fraunces' Tavern in New York.

There was still another ballroom in Newport; this was the famous assembly room of Mrs. Cowley on Church Street. Despite the fact that Mrs. Cowley was regarded by some as a turncoat—and she had certainly let her premises to the British during the sad days they occupied Newport—it was here that Washington danced with Miss Margaret Champlain at the ball after the great reception in his honor, the young lady having the intelligence to select for her turn with the Commander in Chief a popular dance of the day. Asked to call the tune, Washington deferred to his beautiful partner. "A Successful Campaign!" she cried, and Rochambeau and his aides took the instruments from the musicians and played that popular, and, in this instance, prophetic dance measure.⁴

Of the many charming young ladies who enlivened the stay of the French in Newport, in the judgment of the Comte de Ségur, no mean judge, Miss Polly Lawton, or Leiton the Quakeress, as the name was frequently written, was easily the first.

"So much beauty," wrote the count, "so much simplicity, so much elegance, so much modesty, were perhaps never before combined in the same person. Her gown was white, like herself, whilst her ample muslin neckerchief and the envious cambric of her cap, which scarcely allowed me to see her light-colored hair, and the modest attire, in short, of a pious virgin, seemed vainly to endeavor

⁴Old Newport diaries (Stone's *Our French Allies*).

to conceal the most graceful figure and the most beautiful form imaginable. She was a nymph rather than a woman. Her eyes seemed to reflect, as in a mirror, the meekness and purity of her mind, and the goodness of her heart. She received us with an open ingenuousness which delighted me, and the use of the familiar word 'thou,' which the rules of her sect prescribed, gave to our new acquaintance the appearance of an old friendship."

The count related that the conversation of Miss Lawton was marked by candor and originality and was scarcely less fascinating than her personal appearance. She was opposed to all wars, and made no exception in favor of the crusade for American liberty which had brought the French forces across the seas. On one occasion she said, Ségur reports, "We ought never to interfere in other people's business, unless it be to reconcile them, bring them together, and prevent the effusion of blood."

"But," replied the count, "my King has ordered me to come here and fight your enemies and his own."

"The King, then," rejoined Miss Lawton, "orders thee to do a thing which is unjust, inhuman, and contrary to what thy God ordereth. Thou shouldst obey thy God and disobey thy King, for he is a King to preserve and not to destroy. I am sure that thy wife, if she have good heart, is of my opinion."

"What!" exclaimed the count, "could I reply to that angel! For in truth I was tempted to believe that she was a celestial being. Certain it is that if I had not been married, and happy, I should, whilst coming to defend the liberty of the Americans, have lost my own at the feet of Polly Lawton."

The Prince de Broglie was not a whit less ardent in his admiration of Miss Lawton. "She enchanted us all," he wrote, "and although evidently little conscious of it was not at all sorry to please those whom she graciously called her friends. I confess that this seductive Lawton appeared to me to be the *chef-d'œuvre* of nature, and whenever I recall her image I am tempted to write a great book against the finery, the meretricious graces, and the coquetry of many ladies whom the world admires."⁶

Much as the letters of members of the A.E.F., splurging in their newly acquired French, were a joy to the people of Paris in 1918,

⁶There is a portrait of this charming lady in the Redwood Library, Newport.

when joys were rare, so Newport was convulsed by a letter which Colonel Hamilton had received from the charming Count Fleury in the previous summer, and, being human, could not keep to himself. It read:

L'Infantry Camp

DEAR COLONEL:

The officers of the two A Battalions of l'Infantry which I actually command, have applied to me for ceasing to run over those craggy mountains barefooted, & beg that I would write to head quarters to have an order from His Excellency to get one pair of shoes for each; the Shoes they hint to are at New Windsor, and their intention is to pay for . . .

Do not be so greedy for Shoes as for my blanket, and think that the most urgent necessity has determined this application; they are quite barefooted.

I am, very respectfully, Sir
your most obedient Servant

L. Fleury

N.B. As his Excellency could form a very advantageous idea of our being lucky in Shoes by the appearance of the officers who dined today at head quarters, and were not quite without, I beg you would observe to him if necessary that each Company had furnished a Shoe for their Dressing.

And then falling into French he adds: "*Si vous savez un mot de M. de la Luzerne dites le moi.*"⁸

The dances and the festivities, which Rochambeau wisely encouraged, were now interrupted by a sudden and wholly unexpected event. For some weeks Admiral de Ternay had suffered from the gout, and because of this he did not accompany the general on his visit to Boston. Now, however, he was suddenly attacked by what the naval doctors declared was a malignant fever. He died on the fifteenth of December, and the funeral took place on the following day. It was very formal, both military and naval—a state funeral such as Newport had never seen before. The chief mourner was M. Destouches, the ranking captain of the fleet, to whom the command now passed, and he saw to it that his predecessor was laid away in a manner in keeping with his rank.

⁸*Hamilton's Works*. Edited by John C. Hamilton, New York, 1850, Vol. I, p. 81.

Of the American accounts of the great ceremony, apparently only one has been preserved, that by Mr. Hornsby, who was present, which is preserved in the papers of the late David King:

"He died very suddenly, of a malignant fever," he wrote. "The catafalque was erected in the Manton house on Washington Street. It was draped in black crepe and covered with the national flag upon which were placed the hat, the epaulettes, and the many insignia of the distinguished orders which the admiral had worn in life.

"The room where he lay was shrouded in black but lighted by very many wax candles. From here he was carried to Trinity churchyard by the sailors of the flagship. All the distinguished officers of the fleet and the army followed on foot and then came the troops. Such an assemblage of soldiers and sailors with well-appointed arms and accouterments had never been seen in Newport before this day. The interment was at twilight, and the coffin was preceded by twelve priests each with a lighted taper in his hand. After the customary rites the coffin was lowered into the grave which had been prepared in the northeast section of the churchyard. The troops then gave the last salute to their brave commander and left him to sleep in American soil under the protection of the American flag."

Rochambeau's distress at the death of the admiral was outspoken, and the praise he gave him for his services rang true and was evidently sincere. Years later, in his memoirs, he paid this tribute to his companion in the American adventure:

"His greatest enemies cannot deny that he was a man of great probity, and a skillful navigator—that it was impossible to conduct a convoy with greater skill than he did." Lafayette was not so eulogistic. He simply said: "The French squadron had remained blockaded in Newport for months, and I imagine the Chevalier de Ternay died of grief in consequence."

Quite perceptibly now the relations between the French in Newport and the little group of Americans on the Hudson (it could hardly be called an army) had grown less cordial. Even observers less close than Fersen spoke of the intercourse between the Allies as strained. Rochambeau was hurt that Washington had not hastened to greet him, to visit his camp, to review his men, and Washington,

"Stone, Our French Allies."

while not discouraged, was certainly depressed. His expectations had been so high, and then came the news of the smallness of the French force and of the inactive spirit which seemed to possess it.

Fortunately, an act of courtesy and thoughtfulness in the best French manner dispelled these clouds. Under date of February 12 (the French were still using the Old-Style calendar) Rochambeau wrote to his Commander in Chief an account of the first celebration of an event which has now become almost a sacrament to more than 138,000,000 people.

"Yesterday was Your Excellency's birthday," he wrote. "We have put off celebrating that holiday until today by reason of the Lord's day, and we will celebrate it with the sole regret that Your Excellency is not a witness to the gladness of our hearts."

Washington was deeply touched by the compliment, certainly a new experience to him, and he announced his coming for an early day.

Now that the long-delayed and frequently postponed visit had been agreed upon, Rochambeau was evidently determined not to give Washington the time in which to change his mind. M. de Clozen was sent to escort the generalissimo from the Hudson to the sea and he rode posthaste. He slept at Lebanon the first night out from Newport, and the next evening he rested at Litchfield, seventy-two miles farther on. The following day, shortly after noon, he pulled up at Washington's headquarters near New Windsor. Clozen was happy that night because he could make the following entry in his journal, so recently brought to light in a Bavarian *Schloss*: "General Washington, to whom I at once delivered my dispatches, told me under seal of secrecy that he would accompany me the day after tomorrow [March 2, 1781] to Newport."

Washington arrived on the afternoon of the sixth; the admiral's barge was awaiting him at Jamestown; he was rowed directly to the *Duc de Bourgogne*, the flagship, where he was received by the French general and all the ranking officers of the fleet and Army. As he left the ship, a national salute was fired, and when he landed at Long Wharf he was met by the French officers and escorted to headquarters with all the pomp and ceremony accorded to a marshal of France or a prince of the blood. The route was lined with French troops, three deep in close order, for the entire distance. What hap-

pened behind closed doors was not disclosed, and we shall not try to penetrate the veil, but the costume of the major-domo who presided over the festivities should not escape the record.

"He wore," said Mr. Updyke,⁸ "a short, close jacket; a rich, silver-fringed coat; pink shoes; a hat emblazoned with armorial bearings; and a cane with an enormous head after the fashion of the heraldic tabard of the feudal age." Nothing is said of the table appointments at the banquet which followed, but they were doubtless of a nature to impress men who were clothed in rags and living upon "victuals." Some months later, when M. de la Luzerne entertained Washington at one of the French camps in northern Westchester, it is reported that "there was a wagonload of silver for the service." There is abundant evidence to show that the French officers, very wisely, did themselves well when they could.

In the evening the line-of-battle ships and the frigates in the harbor were dressed with lanterns, and the town illuminated almost, if not quite, as bright as day, the city council having voted candles to all who were unable to provide them at their own expense. Of course there was a great procession through the streets. In front walked thirty very proud and happy boys, each bearing a great candle on a stick. Fortunately, the weather was "clear and calm and not cold." So Mr. Updyke sees it all, and Mr. Stevens has preserved his narrative. Mr. Updyke was deeply impressed by the attitude of the "French nobles"—by their deep obeisance as the American general approached, and how they lifted their hats as Washington and Rochambeau, "unbonneted," passed by. He admired the manly beauty of the brothers Viomesnil, both generals. "They are both of commanding height." He described Rochambeau as "a small, keen-looking man, but with the dignity and simplicity of the French country gentleman.

"Our populace," continued Mr. Updyke, "were the only ones who looked at the French, for the eye of every Frenchman was directed at Washington. Calm and unmoved by all the honors that were paid him, the voice of adulation never disturbed the equanimity of his deportment." Of course the ceremonies ended with a ball on the flagship, and Mr. Updyke reports that Washington danced with Nancy Clarke, a girl of thirteen, and niece of a colonel in the

⁸Stone, *Our French Allies*.

Rhode Island Line. So the era of good feeling was inaugurated and long continued. There was a public ball at the French Hall every Wednesday, and a lot of private balls here and there on other evenings. Later on Mr. Vernon had to ask damages to his house as a result of all this dancing, just as at the Hôtel Crillon, many decades later in Paris, damages were assessed and paid, but it is only fair to add that the bills were of different proportions; Mr. Vernon neither asking for nor receiving rent.

Still another of the festivities that marked the visit of the Commander in Chief was a tea party given by Mr. Christopher Ellery at which most of the French and American officers were present. Mr. Ellery was a widower and his daughter, according to the local legend that still survives, "a young woman of beauty and refinement," presided at the tea table. She was apparently suffering from a severe cold and could welcome the distinguished guests only in a whisper. We have documentary evidence of the story so far, but what follows is simply a living legend which no serious historian would countenance for a moment. The general showed some interest in Miss Betsy, but apparently more in her cold, and when still in a whisper she admitted she also had a sore throat, his face is said to have brightened as he exclaimed, "I, too, suffer in that way, and I have a remedy which never fails. I would recommend it to you but I am sure you would refuse to take it."

"I am sure I would do anything that General Washington recommends," whispered Miss Betsy dutifully.

Then the great man explained his family remedy. "Take onions boiled in molasses three times a day; it has cured me of colds and sore throat time and again."

Miss Betsy took the unpalatable mess and an almost immediate cure of her ailments resulted, and with this high precedent the cure is practiced in the Newport of today!

Outside the Ellery mansion, and, indeed, wherever he went, the school children of Newport were drawn up to greet the great Virginian who became the great American—lined up to see him pass and ordered to cheer when he went by, and when he had gone they were made to commit to memory these historic if not poetic lines: "In seventeen hundred and eighty-one I saw General Washington."

While the dancing proceeded, the great men of the Allied staffs

got down to the business that had long awaited attention. Arnold, the traitor, was devastating Virginia, and Lafayette, the ardent, impatient boy, had become tired of staff work. He wanted an independent command with fighting troops, preferably light infantry, and he got it. Everyone, including M. Destouches, who had the temporary command of the fleet, was now in favor of a joint expedition to the Chesapeake. In a few days Lafayette, traveling overland, could be at the Head of Elk, and orders were sent after him to await the arrival of Destouches off the Virginia Capes.

In high hopes Washington returned to the Hudson, but unfortunately the expedition was a disappointment. The elements did not favor the French, as so often "rude Boreas" was in league with Britannia. Off the capes there was an engagement in stormy weather with Arbuthnot; the advantage seems to have been with the French, but it was not decisive. Then after the gale a deep fog settled down upon the scene, separating not only the hostile fleets but the scattered vessels of the two squadrons. Some days later the French returned to Newport to repair several of their seriously damaged ships, and the British still held the capes.

Washington, back on the Hudson, was philosophic as the disappointing news reached him, but as he peered into the future, he saw that, pleasant as was the visit to Newport, the unfavorable balance of affairs had not been changed in the slightest degree. A few days later, writing again to John Laurens, then in Paris making a last appeal for the Second Division, for a larger naval force, for anything that might brighten the aspect of affairs, Washington said, with truth, "It may be declared in a word that we are at the end of our tether and that now or never our deliverance must come."

Hardly had the era of good feeling and understanding between the Allied armies been re-established when an incident occurred which, had those involved been little men or even the ordinary run of humanity, might have put an end to all plans of co-operation and changed the course of history.

Washington, inveterate letter writer though he was, had grown tired of berating congressmen and of pointing out to the governors of the states the tremendous distance that lay between their promises and their performance in the important matter of sending on recruits to fill out the dwindling battalions; so one afternoon he sat down at

headquarters on the Hudson and let his thoughts revert to the farms at Mount Vernon, which he had not seen now for five years, and in a letter to his kinsman, Lund Washington, who was also the manager of his properties, he poured out his heart. The letter, of course, was full of information and advice about subsoiling and rotating of crops. The writing of it must have been a great treat to the Commander in Chief of the ineffective army, but it is quite possible that before he concluded he thought, "was it fair to the good Lund to get a letter from headquarters and not a word about the military prospects?" So for Lund's eyes alone the indefatigable pen traveled over the paper and fashioned words that contained dynamite.

"It was unfortunate," he wrote, "that the French Fleet and detachment did not undertake the enterprise they are now upon when I first proposed it to them. Instead of this the small squadron which took the *Romulus* and the other small vessels was sent, and could not, as I foretold, do anything without a land force at Portsmouth (Virginia). Of this I would not have you say anything."

Lund Washington would undoubtedly have proved discreet, but he never had an opportunity to be indiscreet. The letter was intercepted by the British, and their intelligence officers, immediately appreciating what a wonderful opportunity was presented for making further trouble between the Allies, turned the letter over to the Tory paper in New York, where its publication created a tremendous sensation. Washington knew what was coming and appealed immediately to Lafayette, a boy half his age, for counsel.

Wisely indeed the general placed his youthful adviser in full possession of the facts, that is, as far as he knew them. He stated that he was not able to declare that the published letter was a forgery because some such letter had been written; nor could he declare that it was correct as published because, as it had been intended to refer "only to his private matters, no copy had been retained." Washington intimated that he would not be surprised if the "inspectors of the *Royal Gazette* in New York" had taken liberties with the text, as they had indeed in publishing an alleged letter from himself to Governor Hancock "which had never been written." He did recall that he had been chagrined, upon receiving Lafayette's letter from Yorktown in Virginia, to learn that the French fleet had not appeared

"within the Capes of the Chesapeake, and he had intended to express in confidence his apprehension and concern for the delay."

And now in a letter to Washington of April 26 Rochambeau brings Washington to book:

"If the letter was really written by Your Excellency [he leaves a loophole, but Washington is a gentleman, not a diplomat, and scorns this avenue of escape], I shall beg leave to observe that the result of this reflection would seem to be that we had the choice of two expeditions proposed, and that we have preferred the less to a more considerable undertaking which Your Excellency would have preferred. If such is the meaning, I beg Your Excellency to call to mind that the line-of-battle ships and the two frigates went out of Newport on the 9th of February, in compliance with the demand made by the Congress and the state of Virginia upon Chevalier Destouches (Sr. Naval Officer). I beg Your Excellency further to recall to mind that your letter with the plan for the going out of the whole fleet with a detachment of 1,000 French soldiers to join the Marquis de Lafayette bears date of the 15th, and that I did not receive it until the 19th.

"Having communicated it immediately to M. Destouches, I had the honor on the 20th to send his answer to Your Excellency, and also that no later than the day after the gale of wind which weakened the British fleet toward the end of January, I offered all the land forces that could be transported by the navy, and have not ceased to do so since. I shall not mention to you the reasons that delayed the departure of M. Destouches' squadron, because they do not come under my cognizance. I only state these facts to call to your mind these dates, which I beg you to verify by your correspondence so that you may be entirely persuaded that there will never be the least delay, in what concerns the troops I command, in the execution of your orders as soon as I shall receive them."

Rochambeau was in a very strong position and Washington in an unfortunate plight, but he extricated himself marvelously. The old priest in one of Lever's novels maintains that you cannot tell whether a man is a good rider until you see how he extricates himself after a bad fall. Under this definition Washington now proved himself to be a good rider. He expressed his "unhappiness that accident should have put it in the power of the enemy to give to the

world anything from me which may contain an implication in the least disagreeable to you or to Chevalier Destouches."

He then admitted that he had learned for the first time that his proposal did not reach the count until after the departure of the first squadron, and concluded: "Whatever construction it may bear, I beg Your Excellency will consider the letter as private, to a friend, a gentleman who has the direction of my affairs at home, totally unconnected with public affairs, and on whose discretion I could absolutely rely. No idea of the same kind has ever gone to a public body." Then this masterly conclusion:

"With this explanation, I leave the matter to his candor (Destouches) and to yours, and flatter myself it will make no impression inconsistent with an entire persuasion of my sincere esteem and attachment." Rochambeau was equally handsome; he expressed his complete satisfaction, now that the proper light had been thrown upon the incident, and voiced the hope that it might now be considered closed. So everybody was pleased except the British in New York who, as Mackenzie relates in his diary, had built great hopes upon the letter as an indication of the growing discord prevailing in the camp of the Allies. It is perhaps only fair to say that in this instance the British do not seem to have tampered with the letter that fell into their hands. They probably concluded that they did not have to. For their purpose it could not have been improved upon.

IV

French Officers View America

TO ESCAPE, or at least to mitigate, the ennui of the waiting period, prolonged beyond all expectation, many of the French officers now scattered, traveling through the colonies which to them presented so many surprising features. Some were pleasure seekers, others, like Blanchard, were seeking supplies, for an army eats, even when not on the march, and the larder in Newport was certainly not overflowing and by all accounts the prices were high. Many of these travelers left diaries and memoirs in which are recorded comments on things heard and experienced which help us to realize the lives that were being led by our forebears of that generation.

Blanchard, in search of supplies, records meeting the Count de Viomesnil and the Viscount Mesme on November 28, 1780. "They came to lodge at Providence," he said, "but soon set out for Boston. As our Army remains inactive, our high officers are taking advantage of the season to travel and so become acquainted with the country." And very interesting indeed are the pictures they drew of our colonial forefathers. These pictures of the past should be reproduced at greater length than our space permits. Especially the journal of M. Claude Blanchard, from which we shall quote frequently, is filled with interesting details concerning the sojourn of the French in America which the great nobles, who were his comrades, but who never failed to preserve certain social distinctions where he was concerned, would seem to have overlooked.

"Throughout the war," he wrote, "I set down every day the incidents and the occurrences that concerned me personally. It is

this journal, *assez mal en ordre*, that I now have the leisure to look over." He was writing in the second year of the Terror while in hiding in Paris. Robespierre had issued a warrant to have him brought before the Revolutionary tribunal, but, more fortunate than a great number of the veterans of the American war, he escaped arrest and the guillotine.

Later Blanchard was restored to his rank by Napoleon and was an honored resident of Paris until his death in 1803. Of his stay in Newport he related, "We lodged with the Americans but we asked from them nothing but *le couvert*. Each officer carried with him his provisions, his utensils, a bed and sheets, so we caused our hosts no expense. As for myself, I had two wagons or covered *voitures*, drawn by good horses, and I was in need of nothing." To escape from the cares that always beset supply officers, Blanchard loved to walk "in the beautiful woods that here abound." And in these happy moments he said, "I lived the life of a man who surveys his estate."

His greatest trouble, Blanchard insisted, was in keeping "officers and men supplied with firewood." He would scour the country in search of fuel timber and bargain for it, on the stump or delivered, with the owners. He tells of one farmer who brought in the wood he had purchased in his own cart and he adds, "this farmer turned out to be the brother of the celebrated General Greene. *Voilà les mœurs Américaines.*"

Blanchard goes into ecstasies over our hummingbird, the *oiseau-mouche*. He came upon one for the first time in an after-dinner walk from camp near Baltimore and grows lyrical in trying to describe the wonderful way in which this transparent "bird stops in his flight without beating his wings." He added his testimony to the virtues of the American women. He speaks only of one of the great number he met "who was given to gallantry and she," he admits, "was a European."

M. Blanchard was most frequently in Providence, which he liked better than Newport because (the reasoning of a commissary!) "more supplies are to be found there." He visited the French hospital, where there were still hundreds of sick sailors and soldiers who had not recovered from the hardships of the Atlantic voyage. He found them in a very handsome house, which, he says, was "formerly occupied as a college." He referred to the buildings of what is now

Brown University. He met a Mr. Varnum, who, because "he has been made Commander in Chief of the militia, has been styled General.

"On August 19 [1780]," he wrote, "General Varnum took me three miles from the city to a sort of garden where different persons had met and were playing nine pins. They made us drink punch and tea. The place was pleasant and rural, and this little jaunt gave me pleasure. I was beginning to speak some English words and was able to converse. Besides, General Varnum spoke Latin. On the 20th I dined at the house of the General with his wife and sister-in-law. After dinner, some young ladies came in who were very handsomely dressed and affable in their conversation."

Blanchard here had his first contact with the Masons, and whatever his real feelings may have been he is not betrayed into the least outburst of religious feeling. "It was St. John's day in Providence," he wrote, "which is a great festival for the Freemasons. It was announced in the public papers, for over here societies of this sort are authorized. I met in the streets a company of these Freemasons going two by two, holding each other's hands, all dressed with their aprons, and preceded by two men who carried staves. He who brought up the rear, and who was probably the Master, had two brethren alongside of him, and all three wore ribbons around their necks just like ecclesiastics, who have the blue ribbon."

But the great social event of Blanchard's sojourn in Newport was a "turtle party"—a form of entertainment which he says had "great vogue at this season. It was a sort of picnic given by a score of men to a company of ladies," he narrates. "The purpose of this party was to eat a turtle, weighing three or four hundred pounds, which an American vessel had just brought home from one of our islands in the West Indies. This meat did not seem to me very palatable; it is true that it was badly cooked. There were present some quite handsome women. Before dinner they kept themselves in a different room from the men; they also placed themselves at table all on the same side and the men on the other. They danced after dinner to the music of Lauzun's legion which had been brought here expressly. Neither the men nor the women dance well; all stretch out and lengthen their arms in a way that is far from agreeable. I found myself at table very near the Captain of an American frigate whom I

had seen at Nantes. I perceived today while trying to converse with the ladies that I was still very little accustomed to the English language. During the dinner we drank different healths, as is usual, we to the Americans and they to the health of the King of France. This extended to everybody, for on passing through an anteroom, where some negro servants were drinking, I heard that they, too, were drinking to the health of the King of France."

As to the American table M. Blanchard must be regarded as an authority. He asserted: "They do not eat soups and do not serve up ragouts at these dinners but boiled and roasted dishes and many kinds of vegetables." He adds, "they drink nothing but cider and Madeira wine with water. The desert is composed of preserved quinces or pickled sorrel. The Americans eat the latter with their meat. They do not take coffee immediately after dinner but it is served three or four hours afterwards with tea; this coffee is weak, and four or five cups is not equal to one of ours so that they take many of them. Breakfast is an important meal with them. Besides tea and coffee they put on the table roasted meats with butter, pies, and ham; nevertheless they sup and in the afternoon they take tea. Thus the Americans are almost always at the table yet they are not great eaters. The inhabitants of the entire country are proprietors. They till the earth and drive their oxen themselves. This way of living and this sweet equality have charm for thinking beings and their manners suit me well."

Chastellux, as was to be expected from a world traveler, gave a better idea of the far-flung commerce of the town of Providence which he, too, loved to visit.

"The merchants export slaves," he wrote, "and salt provisions, and bring back salt and a great deal of molasses and sugar from the West Indies. They fit out vessels also for the cod and whale fishing. The latter is carried on successfully between Cape Cod and Long Island, but they often go as far as Baffin's Straits and the Falkland Islands. The inhabitants of Providence, like those of Newport, also carry on the Guinea trade. They buy slaves there and carry them to the West Indies, where they take bills of exchange on Old England, for which they receive woollen stuffs and other merchandise."

We also owe to the pen of Chastellux, who could wield the pen as well as the sword, a charming picture of the domestic interior of a

young American officer. While in Providence in November (1780) he came in frequent contact with a Colonel Peck, a distinguished Yale graduate and deputy adjutant general in the Continental Army. "On the thirteenth," he wrote, "I breakfasted with Colonel Peck. He is the amiable and courteous young officer who spent last summer with General Heath at Newport. He received me in a charming small house where he lives with his wife, who is young also and has a pleasing countenance, but without anything striking. This little establishment, where comfort and simplicity reign, gave an idea of that sweet and serene state of happiness which appears to have taken refuge in the New World, after it had left the Old."

But in speaking of church attendance, the marquis is for once ungallant and even censorious. He wrote:

"Piety is not the only motive that brings American ladies in crowds to the various places of worship. Deprived as they are of all shows and diversions whatsoever, the church is the grand theater where they attend to display their extravagance and finery. There they come dressed in the finest silks overshadowed with a profusion of the most superb plumes. The hair of the head is raised and supported upon cushions to an extravagant height, somewhat resembling the manner in which French ladies wore their hair some years ago. I had come here with no expectation of discovering traces of French modes and fashions in the wilds of America, but I find that the headdresses of all the women, except the Quakers, are high, spreading, and decked profusely with our gauzes."

M. Blanchard, on the other hand, dwelt frequently and at length upon the strict and evidently sincere observance of the Sabbath noticeable everywhere, but particularly in Boston and Providence. Of the latter place he wrote: "At Providence some amiable women of a lively disposition, at whose houses I frequently called, were even unwilling to sing on Saturday evening."

The most valuable of these sketches are undoubtedly those written by Chastellux. Bearing a letter of introduction from Franklin, he was the first of the French officers to visit Washington in the New Jersey camp he later so well described.¹ The Commander in Chief was pleased with this unusual guest and in his next letter to Franklin

¹*New Travels in America*, Paris, 1787. An English edition was published in London a year later.

he wrote: "I thank you for bringing me acquainted with a gentleman of his merit, knowledge, and agreeable manners." For his part, the French soldier and academician was greatly impressed by the appearance and bearing of Washington and he hailed him as the "soul and support of one of the greatest revolutions that have ever happened or can happen again." His charming account of Washington, his generals and his aides, as he saw them in the Continental camp near Paramus, New Jersey, toward the end of November 1780 reads as follows:

"He (Washington) conducted me to his house where I found the company still at table although the dinner had long been over. He presented me to the Generals Knox, Waine, Howe, and to his Family, then composed of Colonels Hamilton & Tilghman, his Secretaries and his aides de Camp, and Major Gibbs, commander of his guards; for in England & America, the Aides de camp, adjutants and other officers attached to the General form what is called his Family.

"A few glasses of Claret and Madeira accelerated the acquaintances I had to make and I soon felt myself at my ease near the greatest and the best of men. The goodness & benevolence which characterize him are evident from everything about him; but the confidence he gives birth to never occasions improper familiarity."

On the following day Chastellux inspected the troops and complimented them on their fine appearance. A heavy rain came on, and the distinguished guests, now "thoroughly wet through," took refuge at the "quarters of the Marquis of Lafayette where," said Chastellux, "I warmed myself with great pleasure, partaking from time to time of a large bowl of grog, which is stationary on his table and is presented to every officer who enters."

The French officer continues:

On our return (to Washington's Headquarters) we found a good dinner ready and about twenty guests among whom were Generals Howe and St. Clair. The repast was in the English fashion, consisting of eight or ten large dishes of butchers meat and poultry with vegetables of several sorts followed by a second course of pastry.

After this the clothe was taken off and a great quantity of nuts was served which General Washington usually continues eating for two hours, conversing and toasting all the time. These nuts (hickory nuts)

are served half open and the company are never done picking and eating them. His Excellency was pleased to enter with me into the particulars of some of the principal operations of the war—but always with a modesty & conciseness which proved that it was from pure complaisance that he mentioned them.

About half-past seven we rose from table & immediately the servants came to shorten it and convert it into a round one; for at dinner it was placed diagonally to give more room. I was surprised at this manoeuvre and asked the reason for it. I was told they were going to lay the clothe for supper. In half an hour I retired to my chamber, fearing lest the General might have business and that he remained in company only on my account, but at the end of another half hour I was informed that His Excellency expected me at supper.

I returned to the dining room, protesting against this Supper, but the General told me he was accustomed to take something in the evening, that if I would only be seated I should only eat some fruit & assist in the conversation.

There were no strangers now and nobody remained but the General's family. The supper was composed of three or four dishes, some fruit, and above all a great abundance of nuts which were as well received in the evening as at dinner. The clothe being removed, a few bottles of good claret and Madeira were placed on the table.

I observed that there was more solemnity in the Toasts at dinner; there were several ceremonious ones, the others were suggested by the General and given out by his aides de camp who performed the honors of the table at dinner; for one of them is every day seated at the bottom of the table near the General to serve the Company and distribute the bottles.

The toasts in the evening were given by Col. Hamilton without order or ceremony—after Supper the guests are generally desired to give a Sentiment; that is to say a lady to whom they are attached by some sentiment, either of love or friendship. This Supper or conversation commonly lasted from 9 to 11, always free, always agreeable.

In Philadelphia, as everywhere else, the Chevalier de Chastellux evidently enjoyed himself immensely on his travels. Here indeed the charm of the unusual visitor was greatly appreciated. In his narrative he made the following notes:

"I was invited to drink tea at Colonel Bland's. That is to say, to attend a sort of assembly, pretty much like the *conversazioni* of Italy. for tea here is the substitute for the *rinfrasca*. Mr. Howell, Governor

of Georgia, Mr. Izard, Mr. Arthur Lee [the two last lately arrived from Europe], M. de Lafayette, M. de Noailles, M. de Damas, etc., etc., were of the party. Colonel Bland is a tall, handsome man who has been in the West Indies, where he acquired French. He is said to be a great soldier, but at present serves his country well in Congress, from Virginia. The Southern delegates, in fact, have great credit. They are incessantly laboring to avert any idea of purchasing peace."

Chastellux is here referring to the distrust of the New England congressmen, in whom, as his correspondence shows, M. Gerard, the first Minister from France, had so little confidence. His letters to Paris reveal that he was always afraid they would abandon the French alliance and make the best possible terms for themselves—a suspicion that, as the event disclosed, was without justification.

The March to the Hudson

THE ARMIES were at a standstill. No joint action had been decided on. Only time was marching on. The resources of the colonists were dwindling rather than increasing, and the outlook was indeed dark. Only in the direction of Paris was there a rainbow of promise in the skies.

Writing to Colonel John Laurens, the military envoy in Paris, under date of April 9, 1781, Washington put the situation frankly as he saw it. His words were:

"If France delays a timely and powerful aid in the critical posture of our affairs it will avail us nothing should she attempt it hereafter. We are at this hour suspended in the Balance; not from choice but from hard and absolute necessity; and you may rely upon it as a fact that we cannot transport the provisions from the States in which they are assessed to the army, because we cannot pay the teamsters who will no longer work for Certificates. It is equally certain that our troops are fast approaching to Nakedness, and that we have nothing to clothe them with, that our hospitals are without medicines and our sick without nutriment except such as well men eat; and that our public works are at a Stand and the artificers disbanding. But why need I run into detail, when it may be declared in a word, that we are at the end of our tether, and that now or never our deliverance must come!"¹

Certainly at this critical moment Rochambeau cannot be charged with shrinking from the facts or of seeking to make the news from

¹Sparks, *Washington*, VIII, p. 5.

the American front more palatable to the authorities at home or elsewhere. In his letter to Washington of February 2, 1781,² he stated:

"I have seen Colonel Laurens [sent by Washington to exchange views before he undertook his mission to France] and I talked to him *dans toute la vérité de mon âme*. I urged upon him the necessity to open his soul, to speak right out [upon his arrival in France] on the state of distress in which this unhappy country will be placed unless powerful assistance is forthcoming now."

Laurens followed this advice to the letter and, as the French records show, his plain speaking gave great offense to Vergennes and to the other ministers. He was the first, but by no means the last, American envoy who was to be denounced as practicing "shirt-sleeve diplomacy."

At this critical moment the "succours" that were in sight, or promised, did not even approximate the minimum figures of what Washington and Rochambeau had thought necessary to save the situation. Rochambeau wanted an addition of ten thousand men to his command and in default of these reinforcements Washington asked for financial assistance that would enable him to equip and maintain on a war footing an American army of thirty thousand men, or, say, a force six times as great as the men that were then with the colors. The Vicomte de Rochambeau, the son of the French general, carried these suggestions, really demands, to France, after the conference at Hartford. On reaching Versailles on November 26 he laid them before Vergennes. The French Minister was greatly disturbed by what he characterized as *les immenses demandes du Congrès*. "It would not be possible for the King to accede to them," was his prompt reply, "and if he did so he would surely ruin France!"

Vergennes appreciated how delicate was the situation, and in his dispatches he now urged M. de la Luzerne to prepare Congress for the formal refusal that could not be long delayed.

"If the King were to consult only his affection for the United States," he wrote, "he would not hesitate. But this is now the beginning of the fourth campaign in which they (the Americans) have been sustained. By these proposals the expenses of the last campaign

²Sparks, VIII, p. 5.

would be exceeded and they call for the extraordinary outlay of 150 millions. . . . The King is obliged to have recourse to retrenchment and to loans for his own services, and he was justified in expecting that the United States would at least provide for the expenses of their own army. Our wish to aid them at every point had induced us to advance recently to M. Franklin one million with which to meet the obligations of last year and four million to provide for the estimates of the coming year. We wish, therefore, that they had not sent Mr. Laurens to us. We shall be grieved to refuse him, but Congress must be notified of this refusal in advance in order that it may not be taken by surprise.”¹³

It was at this dark moment in the affairs of the alliance that Franklin took up his pen and wrote his masterpiece which is *beau-coup dire*. It certainly helped to tip the uncertain scales in favor of further effort for America. He began by insisting upon the “unalterable resolution of the United States to maintain their liberties and independence and to adhere to the alliance at every hazard.” No one knew better than the great man who was writing that very different views were current in Paris, and also no one knew better that unfortunately these views were not entirely without foundation. In a substantial paragraph he stated our wants—our pressing needs: “If in aid of their own exertions the Court of France can be prevailed upon to assume a naval superiority in American seas; to furnish the arms and ammunition and clothing specified in the estimate, heretofore transmitted, and to assist with the loan mentioned in the letter, they (the Americans) flatter themselves that under the Divine blessing the war must be speedily terminated with Glory and advantage to both nations.”

Franklin dwelt upon the distress and the sufferings of the American troops which Lafayette had described to him with such sympathetic words and then came the master stroke: “I am grown old,” he wrote. “I find myself much enfeebled by my recent illness. It is probable I shall not long have any more concern in these affairs. I therefore now express my opinion to Your Excellency that the present conjunction is critical; that there is some danger lest Congress should lose its influence over the people, if it is found unable to procure the

¹³Doniol, *La Participation de la France*, IV, 537.

aids that are wanted, and that the whole system of the New Government in America may thereby be shaken."⁴

Of course Franklin was much too wise to leave Vergennes under the impression that he did not also have the French cause at heart. On the contrary, he proceeded to demonstrate how, in helping America, France would be safeguarding her own vital interests. So he points out, "(1) If the English are suffered once to recover our country, such an opportunity of effectual separation, as the present, may not occur again in the course of ages. (2) That the possession of those fertile and extensive regions and that vast sea-coast (American) will afford them so broad a basis for future greatness, by the rapid growth of their commerce, and breed of seamen and soldiers, as will enable them to become the terror of Europe, and to exercise with impunity that insolence which is so natural to their nation and which will increase enormously with the increase of their power."⁵

While Vergennes did not accede to all these demands, indeed even the long-promised and long-awaited Second Division was not granted, what was given most fortunately sufficed. Nor was Vergennes entirely in accord with the line of argument which the Americans and their French friends advanced. In council the Minister argued, "If more French troops are sent to America the English would increase their force proportionately which with so many more French soldiers removed from the European scene they would be able to do." In his letter to Luzerne of this date he shows that he is unfavorably impressed by the mutinous conduct of the Pennsylvania and the New Jersey troops. He expresses the fear that if "so much is done for them the Americans will relax their efforts." Then, after the words of blame and the reservations, the great news. Count de Grasse had been ordered to send part of his fleet, now on the point of sailing from Brest, to the "North American coast, to co-operate in any undertaking which may be projected by the French and the American generals." The number of ships that will be sent, he explained, "will depend upon the need the Spaniards [in the West Indies] have of our assistance." In regard to finance the twenty-five

⁴Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, IV, 254.

⁵*Ibid.*

million livres asked for was impossible, but the French King will "advance to the Americans in the form of a gratuitous subsidy the sum of six million livres tournois, making the total of the advances in two years 14 million livres tournois."⁸

Now, whether due to the plain speaking of young Laurens, the suavity of Lafayette, or the wise counsel of Franklin, it is certain that, as the result of their united endeavors, the outlook became suddenly brighter. With the arrival of the *Concorde* at Boston on May 8, with the Vicomte de Rochambeau on board, and also the new admiral of the French fleet, M. de Barras, came dispatches that were precise in their nature, and as a result they were comforting. The frigates also brought "hard money" to the amount of a million livres and some explanation of why the long-expected Second Division had dropped out of sight. Holland had at last openly joined the alliance, but for the moment, at least, far from being of assistance, she had to be helped. This circumstance, together with the powerful British fleet cruising outside, had detained in Brest the long-prayed-for reinforcements.

But this dispatch did not close the budget of good news—the first that had come across the seas since the arrival of Rochambeau. There was also a letter to him, a most important letter, written by M. de Castries, the Minister of the Marine, dated Brest, March 21, 1781, and it read: "So as not to deprive America of the assistance which was destined for her, His Majesty took the immediate step of supplying funds and with this purpose in view had assigned the sum of six million livres which General Washington could employ to meet the needs of the American Army." And then the greatest announcement of all the welcome budget ("but of course most confidential," the Minister insists): "The Comte de Grasse, in command of the West Indian squadron now on the eve of sailing from France, has orders to enter American waters in July or August *pour dégager*, to break the blockade by which the squadron of M. de Barras had been imprisoned for such a long time in Narragansett waters." Proudly the Minister enumerated the units of the great fleet that were ordered to sail with de Grasse and he concluded with the triumphant note: "There will be thirty-eight vessels in all, and

⁸Doniol, *Participation de la France*, IV, 584.

so for a considerable period he will be master of the American coast and able to co-operate with you if you wish to undertake operations in the North.”⁷

Electrified by this stirring announcement that at last put an end to their winter of discontent, that closed the long months of delay, doubt, and uncertainty, in a few hours the long-postponed talk, face to face, was arranged between Washington and Rochambeau, to discuss the next step, now that a real step forward was possible.

To escape the publicity that could not be avoided in a bustling town such as Hartford, the charming little village of Weathersfield was selected for the conference. In the following short sentences Washington recorded the bare outline of the meeting that was to have results of such transcendent importance. The entries in his journal run:

“19th (May)—Breakfasted at Litchfield, dined at Farmington and lodged at Weathersfield at the home of Joseph Webb.

“21—Monday. Count de Rochambeau with the Chevalier de Chastellux arrived about Noon.

“22—Tuesday. Fixed with Count de Rochambeau the plan of the Campaign. This day Americans and French dined together at Collyer’s Tavern in Weathersfield.

“23—(Wednesday). Count de Rochambeau set out on his return to Newport while I prepared and forwarded dispatches to the Governors of the four New England states (under flying seals).”

The Webb House, where the tentative plans were discussed and the good understanding reached, still stands; and, thanks to the care of the Colonial Dames of America who treasure it, it has defied the ravages of time and escaped both the neglect and the degradation to which, in the decades of forgetfulness, so many of our Revolutionary landmarks and monuments have succumbed. Nothing is changed. The same trees are there under which the generals sat. You can hear the rustle of the maps, from the pen and pencil of Brskine, which they studied; and the words of the agreements that were reached ring in your ears. You can hear the galloping of the couriers as they hastened away, carrying Washington’s dispatches North, South, East, and West under “flying seals” to the sluggish governors of the dormant states. Money, provisions, transportation

⁷Archives Nat. Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

—all must be forthcoming. "Now or never" was the slogan of that memorable day; fortunately for us and the world it was "now."

While all the participants behaved with diplomacy and with discretion and there was, *mirabile dictu*, little or no leakage, it is quite certain that in all the discussions Washington stood out for his projected attack on New York and that he was supported, though not enthusiastically, by General Knox, the chief of the Continental artillery. He was also supported by General Duportail, a French officer who had served almost from the beginning of the war as chief of the American engineers, and who, a few years later, was to become Minister of War in France.

If Rochambeau's mind was made up at this moment he was too diplomatic to show it, and he apparently gave all due weight to the reasons Washington advanced in these words against the Southern expedition: "The great waste of men which we have found from experience in long marches in the Southern states—the difficulty of transport by land—and others too well known to Count de Rochambeau to need repeating, show that an operation against New York should be preferred in the present circumstances. . . ." And that there might not be the remotest chance of ambiguity or misunderstanding the very day the exchange of views was concluded and Rochambeau left for Newport to prepare for the march—to the Hudson at least—Washington wrote to the French Minister, "I should be wanting in respect and confidence were I not to add that our object is New York."

At the time that the Weathersfield conference was called Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia, urged Washington to come South and take command of the forces of his mother state. Washington admitted in his reply that "his inclination would lead him to the defense of the state where his property and connections are," but added that "among the powerful objections to leaving his present station the most powerful is the fact that no other person has power to command the French troops, now about to form a junction with this army."

Fortunately this letter was not published, and so in the days of stress and of possible misunderstanding the colonists did not learn of the confidential instructions which had been given to Rochambeau, and which, exercising a wise discretion, he had promptly shown to

Washington. They had evidently been drawn with the purpose of preventing French troops from being placed under the command of a Sullivan or of a similar incompetent, of whom it may be admitted there were still one or two at least in the American Army. This instruction read: "But in case the French Division should not be immediately united to General Vasington [sic] and should be detached for an expedition or for operations with American corps, each of the generals shall be independent, the one of the other, whatever their respective rank may be." There was still another reservation which it is also most natural that the French should have made and to which Washington had no objection: "As far as possible you are to keep the French troops entrusted to your command as a Corps and you may state to General Washington, under whose orders the French troops must serve, as the occasion may present, that it is the intention of the King that the French troops should not be scattered and that they should always serve as a Corps d'Armée and under French generals, save only in the case of temporary detachment, and that in these cases it is expected that in a few days they should rejoin the main Body" (of the French).⁸

At Weathersfield, while the plans of campaign were being discussed, what undoubtedly became the closest and deepest friendship of Washington for a French officer was forming, for, of course, we must regard young Lafayette, as the French did, as an American officer. Fortunately Rochambeau brought with him to the conference as his assistant and interpreter the world traveler who had visited the American Army in New Jersey, and it was not long before Washington, who by nature as well as from training was always distant, always formal, found these valuable defenses thawing before the sunny charm of the Chevalier de Chastellux.

Of course in the French Army there were many *grands seigneurs* and many veteran soldiers—men whose experience on the historic European battlefields must have been revealing and absorbingly interesting to Washington, the Indian fighter and the colonial pathfinder. But Chastellux was all these things and more. He had distinguished himself in the Seven Years' War, and then, as the friend of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse and as the honored guest of Madame

⁸Archives, Hist. Guerre, 3733. Instruction Montbarey to Rochambeau dated March 1, 1780.

Geoffrin with whom he dined on the famous Wednesday evenings, he must be regarded as a carpet knight also. He was an academician—the first member of that learned company who explored America and wrote a book about it. He was certainly the most finished product of the best European education that Washington had come in contact with, and it is easy to see the quick conquest which his cultivated mind achieved. It was immediate and complete perhaps because throughout his long and splendid career Washington had a lively appreciation of how fragmentary and imperfect his own education had been. Indeed, as late as July 1785, though then acclaimed by both worlds as the greatest of men, when David Humphreys begged him, even importuned him, to write a narrative of the great events of which he had been such a great part, he declined to do it, not only because of “a pressure of business” (those farm problems at Mount Vernon!), but because of “a consciousness of a defective education.”

Here there came to him out of the skies a man who was on an affectionate footing with the gods and half-gods of the polite world of Europe; a man who knew Grimm, d’Alembert, and Marivaux; who was frequently the host of Hume and Gibbon; who had carried on discussions with Helvetius, with Turgot, and with Brienne, the future cardinal. In a word, the man who came to Weathersfield with Rochambeau and sat in with Washington as interpreter and adviser was a very interesting figure, and, as he spoke English fluently, the information that he had and the experience that were behind him did not remain a closed book to the American officers.

Of course Chastellux’s narrative of travels in America had not appeared, nor yet the remarkable thesis he wrote in 1785 in answer to the question propounded in that year by the Abbé Raynal, “Was the discovery of America an advantage or a disadvantage to the world?” but his great volume, *Félicité Publique*, which runs to eight hundred pages, was in every hand. Some of the conclusions which our philosophic soldier reached in those days are today almost topical. Professional soldier though he was, Chastellux believed in the possibility of eternal peace, and was bold enough to shout his belief from the housetops, to the no little disgust of his army comrades. He, while ever active in his military duties, was always saying that peace would bring about *Félicité Publique* and that nothing

else would or could. Curiously enough Chastellux was the advocate of a league of nations long before the modern phase of this ever-recurring ideal had taken shape; and there is still another one of his opinions which is remarkably up to date.

"Today," he wrote, "nothing impoverishes like war." And he was intelligent enough to note and to emphasize that the impoverishment of the victor, if less noticeable, is none the less real than is the sad plight of the vanquished—a truth which some very great men discovered only as recently as the decade in which we are living. Chastellux threw out the hopeful suggestion that these important facts which he stressed could not continue to pass unnoticed forever. He was confident that the children of men, stupid as they often seemed to be, would someday learn this lesson, and he closed with the hopeful statement: "Love of riches, after having caused so many evils to humanity, will resolve itself into the remedy of all our ills. When it is seen, as it should be, that war only impoverishes and ruins, it will undoubtedly be discarded."

A great many ponderous tomes have been written both in favor of and also in criticism of the ideas of political economy which Chastellux so eloquently defended. Indeed, only recently a Sorbonne doctor wrote a thesis, crowned with honors, which attempts to prove that this gallant French soldier, so dear to Washington, was the first of the Moderns. I shall not pursue my inquiry into this phase of the chevalier's activities, but merely quote the words of Jérôme Adolphe Blanqui, which were exceedingly generous when you remember that it is a man of the university world, a closet philosopher, who is speaking of a brilliant soldier. "He was," said Blanqui, "one of the first writers who dared to shake off the yoke of the classic traditions and to describe the world as he saw it."

With the problems of the opening campaign and the pressure of the many other difficulties besetting them, it is not probable that Washington and Chastellux, so far apart in their life experiences, so close in their sympathies, discoursed upon these vital matters in the Connecticut village, but it is quite certain that Washington was impressed by the manners of the man, and equally certain that he perceived in Chastellux the qualities which Voltaire discovered a year or two later when he addressed to the chevalier his essay on

Goût (Taste) and hailed him as the High Priest of the new god that had arisen in France:

*Vous y logez auprès du Maître
Et le goût est un Dieu nouveau
Qui vous a nommé son grand-prêtre.*

If his letters and journals show that Washington was completely under the spell that the visitor cast about him, the unusual visitor, so dextrous with both pen and sword, it is pleasant to note that the attraction was mutual and lasting. Three years later, when Chastellux was back in France and the banquets at the generous table of Madame Geoffrin were resumed, Grimm wrote to Diderot: "Chastellux is back from America; Washington is his God."

According to M. Blanchard, on the very day of his return to Newport from the historic Connecticut village, Rochambeau issued the preliminary orders for the French troops to prepare for the march South that had at last been agreed upon. Of course now the troubles of the supply officers grew heavy, especially so for M. Blanchard, who had been chosen to act as a pioneer surveyor to go ahead and secure provisions so that the marching troops should travel on full stomachs. According to the chief commissary, and in this he is supported by Fersen, the difficulties of the march were great, and poor Blanchard was evidently in anything but a happy frame of mind—especially at the start. As he proceeded along the proposed route to the Hudson, buying and bartering for provisions, he wrote: "The Americans supplied us with nothing. We were obliged to purchase everything and provide ourselves with the merest trifles. It is said that it is better to make war in an enemy's country rather than among one's friends. If that is an axiom, it acquires more truth when war is made in a poor and exhausted country where the men are possessed of little knowledge, are selfish and divided in their opinions." When the hour of departure struck, all Newport was on hand to see the gallant fellows off and to wish them Godspeed. Some of the onlookers noted curious things. One was the fact that every fifth soldier was given a bottle of vinegar which he was ordered to ladle out and mix with the drinking water "to

kill the malaria germs." A wise precaution, doubtless, but soon to be discarded, as were the red flannel anti-cholera belts so generously served out to our volunteers of 1898 as they embarked for Cuba.

After the long months of inactivity the French soldiers now marched into the unknown land with alacrity and enthusiasm. Many rumors were current as to where they were going, what was to be their destination, but happily on one point there was complete agreement—they were marching toward the enemy!

On his first day out as a supply scout, Blanchard stopped to dine at the famous Waterman's Tavern, five leagues from Providence, and pushed on later to Plainfield, where, as he says, he "lay the night." The next night he "lay at Bolton," where he "was very sick after a fatiguing march." On the eighteenth he arrived at Hartford, by passing "a ferry across the Connecticut River, which emptied into the sea and carries vessels of 70 tons up to Hartford.

"After having paid some attention to my business," he continued, "I went to dine with Colonel Wadsworth, whom I had known in Newport. He is the person who supplied the Army there. He has a handsome house, very neatly furnished."

Leaving Blanchard in the midst of his troubles, let us return to Rochambeau, who, with the main body, was getting ready to move, but rather slowly, as the Americans thought. He first asked Governor Greene for an order "to impress all wagons that are on Rhode Island for carrying our baggage as far as Bristol Ferry." But it was not until June 9 that the actual orders were issued for the First Division to embark on the following day. This was the Bourbonnais brigade and was composed of the banner regiment of that name and the Royal Deux-Ponts. This was to be followed next day by the Soissonais brigade, composed of that regiment and the battalions of the Saintonge regiment.

These troops embarked in little boats on the river, met with the usual difficulties, and only reached Providence late that evening, too late to go into camp, so the town authorities placed a number of vacant houses at their disposal. Here there ensued quite a delay in the forward movement. There was great difficulty in collecting horses for the artillery and trained oxen for the baggage wagons. After all, these were problems for the supply officers alone, and Closen, who arrived in town on the fourteenth with Rochambeau,

was on the tiptoe of excitement and made the following notes in his diary:

"Besides the military objective, about which I know more than the others, and which I know will furnish us with a most interesting campaign, we are all looking forward to other pleasures, seeing the new country, making new acquaintances, learning all about other provinces, the habits of the people, their products, and having intercourse with the good Americans."

Now another occasion for delay cropped up, and M. Blanchard was at his wit's end how to care for reinforcements which had arrived in Boston. Whatever others may think, M. Blanchard, who had to feed them, considered this windfall most inopportune. Count Rochambeau made the official announcement to Washington in his letter of the fifteenth from Providence: "Of my troops who have landed in Boston today, there are 400 who are in condition for duty and 260 attacked with the Scurvy. The 400 will arrive here on Sunday, and on Monday, the 18th, I will push on with the regiment of Bourbonnais. The horses, the artillery, and the wagons are arriving from different places, and I trust that from now on the movement of every regiment will go on regularly."

In the early stages of the march the brigade formation seems to have been abandoned. The British were far away, lethargic, and there was no danger of an attack; and so, "as not to be a burden to the inhabitants," Clozen wrote, "the device of smaller separate units was hit upon." This is made clear by a letter which Rochambeau sent to the Commander in Chief, reporting his progress, under date of June 22, from Hartford:

"I arrived here yesterday with the first regiment, which has been followed this day by the second, and will be tomorrow by the third, and on the day after by the fourth. I shall stay here this day and tomorrow to allow time for our broken artillery caissons and carriages to be mended, and our young artillery horses and oxen to refresh themselves. I shall set off the day after tomorrow with the first regiment for Newtown, and I shall probably arrive there on the 28th and stay the 29th and the 30th."

Once there, the French general stated that he would assemble the regiments in brigades. They would be approaching enemy country then, and more precautions had to be taken. After Newtown he expected to march in two divisions to the North River. He also

explained that as a protection from attack, Lauzun would march on his left flank by a different route nearer the sound through Middletown and Wallingford, Ripton and North Stratford, where he was expected to arrive on the twenty-eighth.

There are in existence many charming letters that were received from the soldiers on the march to the front or sent after them, but surely none can be more charming than this letter of "Molly" Robinson to Noailles dated "Newport 31st of ye 6th Mo. 1781":

Since I wrote last I have had the pleasure of receiving thine of the 17th; and the pain of perusing one of the 19th both from Providence—Pardon the latter expression, it is rough—the sensation which directs my pen, is not.—I confess I was hurt at the idea of thy admitting a thought that it is in the power of absence to reduce our friendship to an acquaintance; or of time to banish him from our memory: indeed, we shall think it injurious, while our hearts speak a language so different, they say it will be impossible ever to forget what has made such pleasing impressions upon them—but if I proceed in this way, I shall be suspected of that inclination to quarrel which I have so often been accused of. I will therefore change the subject and thank thee most sincerely for the pleasure I received from the letter of the 17th and the one of the 19th too. And so you have bid a long adieu to this part of the country, and are going far from us, but my letters shall pursue thee, they shall continually evince to thee the sincerity of that attachment. . . . How has thee contrived, Count de Noailles, to conceal from us the courtier, which might have dazzled our eyes, without touching our hearts; and appear to us only in the endearing light of a friend? . . . My mamma . . . ever claims half thy letters; my father and sister demand their share of me, and if I was to submit quietly to all their requisitions, I should reserve none for myself. . . . Your departure from this place has furnished abundant employment for the idle daughters of Parnassus; every murmuring rivulet and shady grove is called to witness their grief, and every weeping muse is invoked to describe their sorrows. This must doubtless be a very great consolation to you; and to add to thy private satisfaction I assure thee the red and white are distinguished [red and white were the colors of his regiment]. . . . Adieu, Count de Noailles, if thou wishes to make us happy, let us hear often from thee, and be assured that everything which concerns thee is very interesting to this family. May God Almighty preserve thee in every danger, prays M. R. 31st of ye 6th Mo. 1781.*

*Stone.

M. de Closen, now one of Rochambeau's aides, in his account of the first day's march from Providence, went more fully into military details:

"The Army will divide its provisions for man and beast, and camp in different places, so that the passage of the troops may not be a burden to the inhabitants. Wishing to perform a double service for a time I began by mounting guard the evening of our departure from Providence and I decided with the General's permission to march with the regiment the first days of the march that I might perform some act of service for my comrades and not let them do everything for me. On the 19th I left with the Regiment of Deux-Ponts. M. de Viomesnil [the elder] was the superior officer of this Division. Our first day's march was very exhausting, owing to the bad roads between Providence and Waterman's Tavern, and for that matter the troops always march badly the first day out. The artillery arrived very late. On the 20th we continued our march until we reached Plainfield which is composed of some thirty houses which surround the meeting house. The roads were still very bad. Plainfield offers an excellent protection for ten thousand men to oppose an enemy who might attempt to cross the Connecticut River."

Later Closen wrote: "On the 23rd we joined the regiment of Bourbonnais at East Hartford without experiencing our former difficulties, as all the roads over which we marched were good. Headquarters were at Hartford, the capital of Connecticut, situated on the right bank of the river of the same name which is navigable for boats of 150 tonnage for 40 miles further up the river. East Hartford derives its name from the fact that the River divides the town in two parts. In the afternoon I went to Weathersfield, a charming village four miles beyond Hartford. From a belfry I had one of the most beautiful views imaginable. A veritable panorama opened before my eyes.

"The two days' sojourn which each division made at Hartford was fully occupied in repairing the artillery caissons and the wagons. The Royal Deux-Ponts have lost three men up to now and the Soissonais nine. During our stay here troops, guns, animals, equipage, and baggage were all ferried across the river."

The Abbé Robin, however delightful as a diarist, was not a veteran campaigner, and while he was proud of the way the officers

and men bore up under the hardships of the march, as for himself he grumbled not a little. He joined the Soissonais regiment at Providence and he reported that the town was well populated, "the houses mostly wooden—though some are handsome and built of brick." Then the padre tells of his personal sorrows:

"Having books to divert my mind from the fatigues, I write often and in place of ink use the sap from the fruit of an herb—happy if I may but be able to rest awhile. But no—from two o'clock in the morning the noisy beating of the drum orders me to tear myself away from my hard bed, one must hastily pack up his ambulatory dwelling—mount one's horse or follow on foot the slow march of the foot-soldier bent under the weight of his knapsack. Arriving at the place destined for the camp one must still wait during the best part of the day for the wagons carrying our baggage. The sun has almost run its course before our debilitated stomachs have performed their important functions. Stretched out on the dusty grass panting with thirst, I often wished—like the Rich Man—that another Lazarus would dip the tip of his finger in water to quench my thirst. Our young leaders, brought up in ease and luxury, stand the strain with a courage which makes me blush at my weakness. Their frugal but abundant table offers to the officers an existence which without means and servants had been well-nigh impossible, and they encourage the soldiers by walking ahead of them.

"The astonishing thing," continued the abbé, "is to witness the French characteristic of gaiety on all these painful marches. The Americans whom curiosity leads by thousands to our camp are received with joy. We play for them our military instruments, which greatly appeal to them. Then officers, soldiers, and the Americans mix and dance together. It is the feast of Equality, the first fruits of the Alliance which should reign between these nations."

Of the fourth camp, that at Windham, Deux-Ponts wrote:

"We encamped in a little valley surrounded by woods. An hour after our arrival a fire broke out in the forest on the left of the camp. We employed three hundred men in trying to put it out, but did not succeed. The fire burnt only the brush-wood and did not attack the large trees. This accident, appalling in every other region, caused no excitement at all among the near-by Americans, whose country is full of forests. Sometimes even they congratulate them-

selves on having a big conflagration, as it saves them the trouble of cutting down the trees to clear the land."

Closen, while at the fifth camp, recorded the following curious incident:

"We reached Bolton (5th camp) with the greatest difficulty in the world. All the roads were frightful. I hold a position halfway up a hill at the foot of which we have pitched our camp. The Presbyterian minister of this place is a large, stout man with a generous amount of self-possession. He is married but being without children he suggested to the wife of Grenadier Gabel of the Royal Deux-Ponts that he would like to adopt one of her daughters, whom he promised to care for as if she were his own child, and, to close the bargain, he offered 30 Louis. But the Grenadier and his wife were greatly attached to their little four-year-old child and absolutely refused M. Colton's oft-repeated offers—thus proving their unselfish devotion and fine character."

This is the only reference in any of the diaries to the fact that apparently some of the French soldiers were accompanied by wives and children.

Du Bourg is also enthusiastic with regard to the views and vistas he enjoyed in and near Hartford. In his diary he described it as "quite a considerable place, divided by the River of the same name [sic]. We halted there to rest the troops and to make the necessary repairs to artillery and baggage waggons. On the afternoon of June 24 I went to see a charming village, called Weathersfield, only about 4 miles from East Hartford. It would be impossible to find prettier houses and a more beautiful view. I climbed up into the steeple of the church and beheld the richest country I had yet seen in America. From this vantage point you can see for 50 miles around."

The greatest road difficulties were met with at a place called Breakneck Hill, and du Bourg explains that this means *Casse-cou* and adds that the hill was well named. Closen relates how, "On the 27th we marched to Barnes Tavern without much fatigue, but the following day we had a most exhausting march before reaching Break-Neck (between Waterbury and Southbury), a name well deserved for the stony roads and the endless mountains with which this part of the country is covered. They made the journey most dangerous. Two very pretty young ladies whom we found at the

house of M. de Viomesnil seemed to appear out of space to receive us and to some extent mitigate the miseries experienced in the morning. Our artillery and our wagons did not arrive, one by one, until nine o'clock in the evening."

The tenth camp was a little southwest of Newtown. "We halted there," wrote du Bourg, "and should not have left it so soon but for the orders which M. de Rochambeau received here from General Washington requesting him to hasten his march." Du Bourg reports that the letter from American headquarters was dated June 30, and that in it Washington urged the French commander "to push on his men with greater speed than hitherto maintained and by a different route, and all possible secrecy is also enjoined. Orders are accordingly given," wrote du Bourg, "for the First Brigade to march in the morning (July 1) and the Duke's Legion which is now at New Stratford will undoubtedly march at the same time. The rest of the Army will follow when the next Division comes up tomorrow."

These hurry orders, the reason for which was never completely disclosed, at least not to the French, brought Lauzun quickly out of Connecticut into the highlands of northern Westchester. He arrived at the village of Bedford early on July 2 and continued his march that afternoon toward North Castle. It was on the historic green of this beautiful Revolutionary village that the cavalry under Lauzun, that had come from Lebanon by a route nearer the sound, joined forces with the infantry. To effect this juncture Deux-Ponts tells how the Soissonais regiment was compelled to make two days' journey in one.

The pilgrim who tries to follow in his footsteps will find, as indeed du Bourg warned him, that his stated itinerary will be difficult to retrace and that in some respects it is misleading. In those days which tried men's ankles and the axles of their carts, as well as their souls, such roads as there were in this country ran from north to south; also, it is well to remember that, as a general thing, the landmarks he urges you not to lose sight of are gone or no longer recognizable.

If you persist in your purpose, now and again you come upon a stretch of wood road that seems quite unchanged, since it resounded with the martial clank of the metal trappings of Lauzun's hussars, or echoed with the footsteps of Noailles and Clozen, march-

ing out in front to hearten their men. Of course as a general thing the winding roads which followed the local cattle tracks have been engulfed by the great parkways, and the broad avenues which the metropolis sends out into three states like grasping tentacles throttle all country life.

When you leave Ridgebury, the northern section of the stately Ridgefield of today (it has forgotten its Revolutionary name), you advance toward the valley of the Mianus along a road that is little changed, through sylvan scenes that must have been familiar to Rochambeau's men. The forest birds twitter with excitement at the sight of the unusual pedestrian, or is it perhaps that they, too, are listening to the French drums and the American fifes as they played the "Huron March" in the heroic marches long ago?

Suddenly you come out of the woodland and into a valley of stately trees and living streams, and if you are guided by Erskine's map,¹⁰ and if well advised you will be, you should look for the house where the map states, without further details, that "A Devil" lived in those epic days.

Here we are confronted by change; only a gaunt and blackened chimney indicates where this homestead stood. Bearing off to the right, and only a few yards farther on, the narrow, hesitating wood road is suddenly swallowed up by a great highway; it knows exactly where it is going and will not deviate for hill or dale. Three hundred yards farther along it almost runs over the Revolutionary mill, where the grain for Washington's army was ground in the days after the White Plains battle, when the American troops were scattered all along the ridges of North Castle that now begin to rise up out of the valley before you.

The mill grinds no more, but it can. It is quite spruced up and seems to enjoy the elegant leisure by which it is enveloped. The water tumbles idly over the dam, despite the many plans of local wisecracks, who hate to see so much power going to waste. The mill has a satisfied air, and smiles upon its appreciative owner as though it knew from the sad fate of near-by landmarks how much

¹⁰First topographer of the Continental Army; originals of these remarkable maps are in the possession of the New York Historical Society—a gift of Gouverneur Morris, chairman of the War Committee of the Continental Congress and founder of the society.

more dignified it is to remain a historic monument than to become a garish teahouse.

The village green at Bedford which now opens before you is little changed from what it was on that far-off day when the gay Lauzun galloped across it with the black heron feather quivering in his cap. The feather was the parting gift of Madame de Coigny when the *Beau Sabreur* sailed away to help the Americans. Next to his high-beating heart he always carried a packet of her letters, and this perhaps explains his orders to the dashing hussars who followed him that should he fall they should bury him there "but not disrobe him."

They had met only a few days before the expedition sailed, during a fete which the city of Paris offered the King. "At the banquet," Lauzun wrote in his memoirs, "she appeared wonderfully attired and with a great black heron feather on the right side of her robe." The feather she gave him, and her letters came across the seas to her cavalier in America, despite the British fleet and the cosmopolitan corsairs. "With what touching simplicity she revealed her soul," commented Lauzun in his memoirs. "She did not say she loved me, but she said that she counted so much on my sentiment for her that she made me almost as much pleasure." The charming Madame de Coigny, if it is not peering too far into the dark future that awaits so many of the actors in this narrative, was the grandmother of the Duchesse de Praslin, whose horrible death at the hands of her husband, a peer of France, contributed more than any other factor to the overthrow of the Monarchy of July.

Cromot du Bourg, who apparently had arrived in Boston with the replacement troops some weeks before, gave a vivid description of this stage of the journey South and the coming together of the columns: "In Bedford," he wrote, "the legion of Lauzun which up to this time had marched on our left flank joined us, and here in Bedford we took up a position from which it would have been impossible to drive us. The Grenadiers and the Chasseurs were placed beyond the village, and the Legion of Lauzun in advance of them, and still farther on in front of us were 160 American dragoons. On arriving at Bedford we learned that the evening before a party of English dragoons burned some houses at a short distance from the Village which had itself suffered great depredations a short time before.

This is a very small place and it was with difficulty that we found room for the small headquarters of our First Division.

"Washington arrived and encamped his army a few miles to the right of us. We are distant at the farthest not more than 15 leagues from New York and from this moment we may consider our campaign as opened." "July 3rd. The army marched to North Castle where it encamped in an excellent position although less military than that of yesterday. We halted the 4th and 5th at North Castle and to this place M. de Fersen and M. de Vauban returned and rejoined. They had been given permission to follow the Legion of Lauzun which was expected to surprise Delancey's corps at Morrisania. At the moment they appeared, however, they saw about 3,000 English debouching in several columns. This compelled them to recross a stream (the Bronx) and fall into line of battle behind Gen. Lincoln."

The meeting of the generals at North Castle and the coming together of the French and American troops are very simply described by du Bourg: "On July 5," he writes, "General Washington came to see M. de Rochambeau. Notified of his approach, we mounted our horses and went out to meet him. He received us with the affability which is so natural to him. He is a very fine-looking man. His bearing is noble in the highest degree and his manners are those of one perfectly accustomed to society, quite a rare thing certainly in America.

"He paid a visit to our camp, dined with us, and later we escorted him several miles on his return." He adds, "On this occasion I was equally surprised and touched at the true and pure joy of General Washington. Of a natural coldness and of a serious and noble bearing, which in him is true dignity, and which so well adorns the chief of a nation, his features, his very deportment—all were changed in an instant. He put aside his character as arbiter of North America and contented himself for the moment with that of a citizen, happy at the good fortune of his country. A child whose every wish had been gratified would not have experienced a sensation more lively, and I believe that I am doing honor to the feelings of this rare man in endeavoring to express their ardor."

General Dumas,¹¹ who was also present, was equally enthusiastic in his memoirs. He wrote:

¹¹Vol. I, p. 44.

"General Washington went in person to the French headquarters accompanied by the Marquis de Lafayette. This interview between the two generals was to us a beautiful sight. We had been impatient to see the hero of Liberty. His dignified address, the simplicity of his manners and mild gravity, surpassed our expectation and won every heart."

On the other hand, M. Blanchard, the commissary, wrote: "His physiognomy has something grave and serious, but is never stern and, on the contrary, becomes softened by the most gracious and amiable smiles. He is affable and converses with his officers familiarly and gaily."

The Prince de Broglie, who had probably more experience of camps and courts than any of his comrades quoted above, says of Washington: "In his private conduct he preserves that polite and attentive good breeding which satisfies everybody and offends no one. He is a foe to ostentation and to vainglory."

The Chevalier de Chastellux, who was closer to the Commander in Chief than any of the French officers except Lafayette, wrote: "It is not my intention to exaggerate. I wish only to express the impression that General Washington has left on my mind. The continent of North America, from Boston to Charleston, is a great volume, every page of which presents his eulogium. Brave without temerity, laborious without ambition, generous without prodigality, noble without pride, virtuous without severity. It will be said of him at the end of a long civil war, he had nothing with which he could reproach himself."

The next day, July 6, du Bourg wrote: "We left very early in the morning to make a junction with the American Army, and encamped on the 'white' Plains, Philipsburg. We had already suffered terribly on our journey with the excessive heat of the country, but it is impossible to be more troubled by it than we were this last day. More than 400 soldiers dropped down, unable to march further, but by halts and care all at last reached their haven. We went into camp with our right resting on the left of the American Army, in a perfectly good position where we would be extremely glad to have M. Clinton come after us. The baggage and artillery got in very late and three men of the Deux-Ponts regiment apparently deserted."

Although it was an official bulletin, Washington announced on

the same day in warm terms the arrival of the French: "The Commander in Chief with pleasure embraces the earliest public opportunity of expressing his thanks to His Excellency, the Count de Rochambeau, for the unremitting zeal with which he has prosecuted his march in order to form the long-wished-for junction between the French and the American forces, an event which must afford the highest degree of pleasure to every friend of his country, and from which the happiest consequences are to be expected. The General entreats His Excellency, the Count, to convey to the officers and the soldiers under his immediate command the grateful sense he entertains of the cheerfulness with which they performed so long and laborious a march at this extreme hot season. The regiment of Saintonge is entitled to peculiar acknowledgements, for the spirit with which the men continued and supported their march without one day's respite."

From this special citation of the rear-guard regiment it would appear that the men of the Saintonge, fearful of missing the first brush with the British, came right along without the rest days enjoyed by the other units and overtook the vanguard as they came into the Allied camp.

The grumblings of Blanchard and the other supply officers at the want of consideration and assistance from the civilian population do not seem to have affected the judgment of Rochambeau; in any event, it is the business of the commanding general to overlook, and as speedily as possible to forget, such unpleasant details. His first words to Washington were that the march had been made without any complaints and that the "people received them with blessings." And from "The White Plains" on July 6 he wrote to M. de Barras, the new naval commander in Newport: "We have made the most rapid march, without any dissatisfaction, without leaving a man behind us, except ten love-sick soldiers from the regiment of Soissonais who wanted to return to see their sweethearts at Newport and for whom I am going to send. Our junction was made with great acclamation on the part of the Americans." In his official report to the elder Ségur, who was now Minister of War, Rochambeau wrote: "We have made 220 miles in eleven days' march. There are not four provinces in the Kingdom of France where we could have trav-

eled with as much order and economy, and without wanting for anything."

A description is lacking of the wagon trains of the main division, but the account of a local historian of the passage of Lauzun's legion through Redding a few hours before it joined the infantry at Bedford would seem to indicate that the gallant marquis did not propose that his men should be dependent for provender on the country they passed through. "They camped on the old parade ground," he wrote. "Their supply train numbered 810 wagons, most of them drawn by two yoke of oxen and a horse leading."

The camp at Philipsburg, where the main body of the American troops had long awaited the important decision that was so difficult to make, the advance on New York or the march South, rested on the Hudson River at Dobbs Ferry. Here there were strong earthworks, which extended east to the Sawmill River. The French, when they arrived, lay farther inland, beyond the valley of the Sawmill River. Every now and then what appears to be a French oven or a dugout is brought to light by the historical researchers of the neighborhood. In one aspect, the place is fortunately quite unchanged. In his journal Count de Damas wrote: "We have a charming position here among the rocks and under magnificent tulip trees." Both the rocks and the beautiful trees are still there.

The Abbé Robin also gives an arresting account of what he, too, saw at Philipsburg, and of the preparations for the march South. He manages to present a new and perhaps not a wholly correct account of why the numbers of the American Army fluctuated with such astonishing rapidity. He wrote: "How many men Washington has is not known; he has always had the ability to conceal his numbers even from the very units that compose it. Now with a few soldiers he forms a Spacious Camp and spreads a large number of tents. Then again with a large number of men he reduces his tentage and his force almost vanishes. On the moment even though detachments may not have been sent away the camp does not seem to contain more than a skeleton of an army."

The abbé also gives an interesting account of his first impression of the American soldiers: "As yet," he says, "they have no regulation uniform, only perhaps the officers and some of the artillery. Several regiments have little white *casques avec des franges*—

fringed hunting tunics—the effect of which is quite agreeable. They all wear linen pantaloons, easy and comfortable especially during the great heat. They permit perfect freedom of action while on the march. With a food ration less substantial than ours and a less vigorous physique, they are well able to stand the fatigues, perhaps for this very reason.

“The great advantage of suitable clothing was not sufficiently appreciated in France,” he continued. “There one has sacrificed too much to appearances. One has there forgotten that troops are intended for action and not for show. The ideal clothing would be a garment as light as possible, only sufficient to cover the soldier and not to hamper or harass him. The reason why the Soissonnais had so few stragglers and so few sick on the march was because our colonel had taken the precaution of having linen breeches made for all the men.

“These American linen uniforms are very satisfactory in every way and are kept quite clean. This neatness is noticeable particularly among the officers. When viewing their fine appearance one would suppose that these troops were immediately followed by a considerable baggage train, but it is not so. I am greatly astonished at finding in their tents, where three or four men live, not over 40 pounds of baggage. Hardly any of them have a mattress. One blanket spread out over branches and the bark of trees serves their officers as a bed. I notice the same practice among the soldiers. They are careful not to sleep directly on the ground, while our men prefer it.”

The abbé does not believe in the adjacent Croton water supply, although the people of New York have been drinking it these many decades. He thinks his colonel preserved the health of his men because he ordered the superior officers to mix rum with their water. Also, when the march South began, the colonel would send ahead and purchase barrels of cider which “he would distribute to the men at low cost price.”

Later on¹² the abbé gave a graphic description of a July storm in Westchester which made the first *étape* of the march South particularly disagreeable. It was twenty-two miles from the Allied camp back to North Castle and heavy rains followed them all the way.

¹²Robin, p. 77.

The abbé wrote: "Instead of getting there at 10 or 11 in the morning, we did not arrive until 8 the following day." Officers and soldiers alike passed the night on the road in "deplorable weather with the water halfway to our knees." It was evidently more through bad luck than by design that the abbé became involved in this distressing march. He admits: "I most imprudently went forward by a road infested with mauraunders who show no mercy to the French. A servant escaped them recently only because he was heavily armed; and within a few days they have hanged the secretary of one of our commissaries and murdered an officer of the Lauzun regiment. I was most fearful, indeed frightened, I admit, on finding myself alone and without defense in these woods. I was afraid I would be added to the number of those who have become the victims of the Anti-Republicans. Fortune favoring me, I at last reached camp without tent and without shelter; I passed the night lying down by a great fire, being scorched on one side while I was inundated on the other.

"Because of extreme scarcity of animals, all our officers' baggage had been cut down to 150 pounds," he continued. "Nevertheless, our young officers, born to ease and luxury, supported the fatigue with a courage which made me blush for my weakness. Most of them encouraged the soldiers by marching on foot at the head of the column. Indeed, the Vicomte de Noailles made the whole journey South on foot." He then explained that this was the march toward King's Ferry for the purpose of crossing the river, and that the Americans marching close to the river got there first.

And then, for once, in the friendly letter which from King's Ferry on August 21, 1781, Washington wrote to Rochambeau, he broke out with a French expression. Fortunately this letter was not published at the time, so it did not become manifest to ardent Republicans that the general was being corrupted by French influences.

"I shall be happy in your company tomorrow at dinner in my quarters," he writes, "and will meet you at the Ferry tomorrow by eight o'clock. When we will either be furnished with some cold repast *en passant*, or I will take you to my quarters about three miles from the Ferry where you shall be introduced to a warm breakfast."¹⁸

¹⁸Rochambeau Papers.

The Lure of New York

IT IS passing strange that the writers of the many volumes that have been written to explain in detail the genesis of the campaign that resulted in victory, upon which the Allied armies are now embarking, should almost invariably ignore the most valuable original document dealing with it that survives. Yet without its authoritative guidance, what happened in these days of doubt and uncertainty is quite incomprehensible. Let us look into what Washington called his *Concise Journal of the Military Transactions*,¹ which most fortunately he began to keep on May 1, 1781. Perhaps this great document has been ignored so generally because of the regrettable slackness in some quarters that it reveals. Yet it is not fair to those who faced the storm and remained steadfast to ignore that even in those heroic days there were "summer soldiers" too.

"All business is being done by Military Impress," Washington wrote in May 1781: "We are daily and hourly oppressing the people, souring their tempers and alienating their affection. Instead of having the regiments compleated to the new establishment (and which ought to have been so by the 15th of December) agreeable to the requisitions of Congress, scarce any state in the Union has at this hour an eighth part of its quota in the field and little prospect, that I can see, of ever getting more than half.

"In a word, instead of having everything in readiness to take the Field, we have nothing—and instead of having the prospect of a

¹It is today one of the many Washington treasures in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

glorious offensive campaign before us we have a bewildered and gloomy defensive one, unless we should receive a powerful aid of Ships, Land Troops, and money from our generous Allies, and these at present are too contingent to build upon."

On May 6 the entry reads: "I resolved to send General Heath [second in command] to make to the respective legislatures, East of York state, pointed representations, and to declare explicitly that unless measures are adopted to supply transportation it will be impossible to subsist and keep the troops together."

Then the entry of May 22, after the conference with Rochambeau: "Fixed with Count de Rochambeau upon a plan of campaign in substance as follows: that the French Land force (except 200 men) should march, so soon as the squadron could sail for Boston, to the North River and there in conjunction with the American Army commence an operation against New York (which in the present reduced state of the Garrison would fall unless relieved) the doing which would enfeeble their Southern operations and in either case be productive of Capital advantages, or to extend our Views to the Southward as circumstances and a naval superiority might render more necessary and eligible."

On May 23 the indomitable Commander in Chief wrote: "Count de Rochambeau set out on his return to Newport while I prepared and forwarded dispatches to the governors of the four New England states calling upon them in earnest and pointed terms to complete their Continental Battalions, for the Campaign at least, if it could not be done for the war, or for three years."

On May 26 is recorded the first ray of brightness in a long-overcast sky: "A letter from the Hon. Jno. Laurens, Minister from the United States of America at the court of Versailles, informing me that the Sum of 6,000,000 livres was granted as a donation to this country, to be applied in part to the purchase of arms—cloaths, etc., etc., for the American Troops, and the ballance to my orders and draughts at long sight." Then the great news that lifted all hearts: "And that a Fleet of 20 Sail of the Line was on its departure for the West Indies, 12 of which were to proceed to this Coast where it was probable they might arrive in the month of July."

Colonel John Laurens of South Carolina, having spent several years at school in Geneva, spoke French well and was the linguist

of Washington's staff. But he was a combat soldier also. He was severely wounded at the battle of Germantown. He had much to do with thwarting the plans of the Conway Cabal and he challenged General Charles Lee to a duel in which Lee was wounded "for making slurring remarks about General Washington." In December 1780, when the American campaign was at a standstill, Laurens, then in his twenty-sixth year, was commissioned by Congress as Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of France; not to supersede Franklin, as Washington explained, "but to reinforce him, because as a soldier he could speak knowingly of the State of the Army and its Needs." Colonel Laurens further distinguished himself at the siege of Yorktown but most unfortunately he was killed in an unimportant skirmish in South Carolina a few weeks before the preliminary peace was signed.

But the dispatches that had been sent out under "flying seals" to the states to the south elicited few answers, all unsatisfactory, and even these came back to the perplexed Commander in Chief at a snail's pace, leaving Washington in a humiliating position. On July 20 he wrote: "Count de Rochambeau having called upon me in the name of Count de Barras (the commander of the French fleet) for a definite plan of campaign, that he might communicate it to Count de Grasse, I could not but acknowledge that the uncertainties under which we labor—the few men who have joined, either as recruits for the continental Battalions or Militia, and the ignorance in which I am kept by several of the states on whom I mostly depended—especially Mass., from whose governor I have not received a line since I addressed him from Wethersfield the 23d of May last, render it impracticable for me to do more than to prepare, first, for the enterprise against New York, as agreed at Wethersfield, and secondly for the relief of the Southern States, if, after all my efforts and earnest application to these states, it should be found at the arrival of Count de Grasse that I have neither men nor means adequate to the first object." Then the perplexed Commander in Chief naturally refers to the uncertain factors outside of American control. He does not know when the French fleet will arrive, that is, not with any certainty, "and whether land troops would come in it or not, as had been earnestly requested by me and enforced by the Minister of France."

Drawing a little closer to the enemy, Washington had gone into camp at Peekskill on June 24. It had been his intention there to await the coming of Rochambeau and the French contingent, but four days later, on the twenty-eighth, he received information from the secret agents of Captain Tallmadge, active in and around New York, which he thought justified a change of plan. He decided that a favorable opportunity was presented to begin operations by a sudden attack on the enemy where he was reported to be weakest—at the north end of New York island.

Whatever the information was, and whatever may have been the plans that were based on it—at this day both are somewhat obscure—it is certain that the Commander in Chief determined to feel out the enemy's position by closer contact and in any event to secure a nearer view of his defenses on the coveted island. Perhaps this is all we can hope to know of why the hurried orders were sent to the French, marching in a leisurely fashion across Connecticut, and how and why the confusing operations in front of New York began.

While these troop movements are vexatious and at times inexplicable to the historians of the war, fortunately at the time they were also confusing to General Clinton, in command of the British forces in and around New York, and as he thought throughout the colonies. As a result Clinton not only failed to send reinforcements to the South, which Cornwallis always asserted had in certain contingencies been promised to him, but demanded the return from the Southern army of three battalions for the purpose of strengthening his position in New York now, as he thought, threatened by the approach of the Allied forces. If the plan of the campaign that now began is not clear, Washington's hopes and wishes speak from every page of his journal. He desired above all things to attack the invaders in New York. Success there would end the war. Only if this operation had to be abandoned would he consider the projects which he regarded as of secondary importance. If upon his arrival de Grasse was not strong enough to secure the command of the seas, if he brought only a small force to be landed, if the governors of the states refused to send their long-promised quotas of men, then the Commander in Chief had decided, in conjunction with the slender force that Rochambeau was bringing to his support, to attempt some measure of relief for the harassed and overrun Southern colonies.

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In his memoirs Lauzun related at great length his part in the desultory operations that now took place. Many statements that he made are not confirmed by the reports of the adjutant general of the Continental Army, and his figures as to American losses are greatly exaggerated. However, his account is interesting and doubtless correct as to what came under his personal observation: "I reached the place as ordered," he wrote, "although bad roads and terrible heat rendered the march very difficult. General Washington, who was well in advance of both armies, told me he destined me to surprise a Corps or body of troops camped before New York to sustain the Fort of Knyphausen, which they regarded as the key to New York [this corps was Delancey's]. He enjoined on me to march all night so as to attack them at break of day. He sent with me Sheldon's American dragoons and several battalions of American light infantry.

"By another road, six miles to the right, he had sent General Lincoln with a Corps of 3,000 men to surprise the fort of Knyphausen, and I was to prevent aid being sent to the Fort. He (Lincoln) should not have shown himself until my attack had commenced and I had notified him of it. But he amused himself with firing on a little fort that had not seen him and that gave the alarm to the troops I was to surprise. . . . Lincoln was beaten and would have been cut off from the army had I not gone to his rescue. I charged with my cavalry and Lincoln profited by this to retreat in very bad order. He lost two or three hundred killed or prisoners, and many wounded.

"I then met Washington as he came marching with considerable force to save Lincoln, for whose safety he was most anxious. He showed the greatest joy on seeing me and profited by the opportunity to make a reconnaissance close up to New York. I accompanied him with one hundred Hussars. We were frequently fired upon with guns big and little, but we saw everything we wanted to see. Our reconnaissance lasted three days and was excessively fatiguing. We were on the go day and night and we had nothing to eat but the wild fruits we met with on the road. Washington wrote M. de Rochambeau in the most flattering terms of my services, but my General forgot to mention this in his correspondence with France."

In his narrative General Dumas gave another account of the in-

cident and the following explanation of the change in plan and the resulting forced marches: "Having noticed," he wrote, "that General Clinton had sent several large detachments of men into the Jerseys, our Commander in Chief (Washington) thought it might be possible to surprise Fort Washington at the entrance of the island of New York. He gave the execution of this *coup de main* to General Lincoln who commanded the vanguard, he (Washington) marching with the remainder of the army to his support. At the same time Washington urged General Rochambeau to hasten the march of the first French brigade and also the Legion of Lauzun to support Lincoln should he become seriously engaged with the main body of the English Army."

According to Deux-Ponts, who with his regiment awaited further orders at North Castle: "Lincoln delivered his attack on the outposts of the enemy on July 3rd and was driven back with a loss of 80 men and was compelled to fall back upon the forces of Washington placed so as to cover his possible retreat. The Legion which had only heard the musketry, without taking part in the fight, retired, and so ended a day little memorable and without glory." And he adds, "We never could find out the truth as to this attack nor the reason of its failure. The Duke de Lauzun who was there told me himself that he could offer no explanation—that he knew nothing about it."

This little encounter, which was evidently not regarded as auspicious by the French, was the only clash that took place on the long march from the Hudson to the James. While Johnston² quotes Washington as blaming Lauzun for delay in getting into line, he was evidently not entirely displeased with the results, meager as they appear to have been. He had evidently impressed Clinton with the idea that perhaps New York was the objective of the Allied armies, and at this time, with as yet no definite news from de Grasse, perhaps it was. It is certain, however, that under this impression Clinton compelled Cornwallis to send back to New York troops that would have been very useful to him three months later, when the battle scene had shifted to Virginia.

There were many reasons why Washington could not dismiss from mind the long-planned attack on New York. Incidentally, perhaps he wanted to shield his good friend Gouverneur Morris from further

²Henry P. Johnston, *The Yorktown Campaign*, New York, 1881.

losses. Morris, who was always the most optimistic member of the Board of War, had written Hamilton some months before: "I shall lose two Beaver hats if our troops are not in possession of New York by the first of July next. Would it not be prudent to make several attacks at the same time? If only one should prove successful it would give splendor to our arms and dismay to the enemy." Most naturally, Morris was anxious to save the manor house, in which he was born and where, full of honors, he was to die, from the devastation and the ignoble contacts of the Tory irregulars who were housed there.

But the time has come to let the Commander in Chief explain the plans which have apparently caused the historians so many perplexing moments. Under date of June 28 he wrote in his journal: "Having determined to surprize the Enemy's Posts at the No. end of Yk. island, if the prospect of success continued favorable, and having fixed upon the Night of the 2nd of July for this purpose—And having moreover combined with it an attempt to cut off Delancey's & other light Corps, without Kingsbridge & fixed upon Genl. Lincoln to command the first detachment & the Duke de Lauzun the 2nd, everything was put in train for it and the Count de Rochambeau requested to file off from Ridgebury to Bedford & hasten his March—While the Duke de Lauzun was to do the same & assemble his Command."

In great detail Washington goes into the composition of the joint expeditionary force; Lauzun was to be supported by "3 or 400 Connecticut State Troops under the command of General Waterbury—about 100 York Troops under Capt. Sacket—Sheldon's Legion of 200 & his own proper Corps." Washington further sets down in his journal that "Lincoln's Command was to consist of Scammell's light troops and other detachments to the amount of 800 Rank and file, properly officered—150 Watermen—and 60 Artillerists."

And so on July 2 Washington set in motion the Continental Army "in order to cover the detached troops—and improve any advantages that might be gained by them." He crossed over the Croton River to the church at Tarrytown "and completed the remainder of the March in the night, arriving at Valentine's Hill [at Mile Square] about Sunrise."

Very concisely, and with great restraint, Washington confided to his journal his view of what happened:

"July 3rd. The length of Duke Lauzun's March & the fatigue of his Corps prevented his coming to the point of Action at the hour appointed. In the meantime Genl. Lincoln's Party [expected to surprise the enemy] were attacked by the Yagers. Being disappointed in both objects from the causes mentioned, I did not care to fatigue the Troops any more but suffered them to remain on their arms while I spent good part of the day in reconnoitering the Enemy's works. In the afternoon we retired to Valentine's Hill and lay upon our arms. Duke Lauzun & Waterbury lay on the East Side of the Brunx River, on the East Chester road." And then the record of a sad Fourth for the Commander in Chief: "July 4th. Marched & took a position a little to the left of Dobb's Ferry & marked a Camp for the French Army on our left. July 5th. Visited the French Army which had arrived at North Castle."

Washington described at great length what he saw on this and other scouting expeditions: "The island (Manhattan) is totally stripped of Trees," he writes, "and wood of every kind. But low bushes, apparently as high as a man's waste appear in places which were covered with wood in the year 1776. In the hollow below Morris's Heights—between that and Haarlem is a good place to land. Forts Tryon, Knyphausen, and Ft. George appear to be well friezed, ditched and abattied. In a word to be strong and in good repair. On the height opposite to Morris's white House there appeared to be another Regt. supposed to be the 30th."

Another expedition, and with much larger force, is described in the journal entry of July 21: "Ordered abt. 5,000 men to march at 8 o'clock to reconnoiter & cut off such of Delancey's Corps as should be found within their lines." Cavalry of Sheldon was to "Scour Frog's Neck." Sheldon's infantry was to join the legion of Lauzun "for the purpose of Scouring Morissania." Now follow pages descriptive of what the Commander in Chief saw on these hazardous expeditions. While he does not say so, it is evident that all thought of a general attack in force had been abandoned. Now he is always looking for a "Crossing place most favorable to a partisan Stroke." How reluctant he is to give up the attack on New York! But the necessary men are not forthcoming. Congress does nothing but talk, and so, like all great commanders, Washington shaped his plans to fall in with untoward conditions beyond his control.

Washington was disappointed and distressed at the meager results from so much exertion and activity, but he kept this to himself and to his journal. When he took up his pen to report the affair to Congress he was grateful for the small favors he had received and very appreciative of the efforts of the French. This wise letter reads:

Headquarters Near
Dobbs' Ferry
6th July, 1781.

I cannot too warmly express the obligations I am under to the Count [Rochambeau] for the readiness with which he detached the Duke de Lauzun & for the rapidity with which he pushed the march of his main army, that he might have been within supporting distance, had any favorable Stroke on the enemy below given us an opportunity of pursuing any advantage which might have been gained. Gen. Lincoln had five or six men killed & about thirty wounded in this skirmish.

If these operations before New York were barren of results they gave several more of the French officers opportunities to enjoy close views of Washington, and the hasty pictures of what they saw make invaluable footnotes to history. Describing the reconnaissance, with Morrisania as its objective, in which Washington and Rochambeau both took part, Cromot du Bourg, a personal aide to the French general, wrote: "We made it most carefully although we were harassed by six or seven hundred cannon. The Americans lost two men and we captured about twenty or thirty of the English and killed four or five. I cannot insist too strongly how I was surprised by the American Army. It is truly incredible that troops almost naked, poorly paid, and composed of old men and children and negroes should behave so well on the march and under fire. I expressed this astonishment to M. Rochambeau and he never ceased to speak of it along the road on our way back. I do not have to speak of the *sang-froid* of General Washington. It is known. But this great man is a thousand times more magnificent and more noble at the head of his army than in any other situation."

While in this instance he is not precise as to dates, it was probably on this reconnaissance of July 22 that M. de Cloisen, according to his own account, greatly distinguished himself. It is only fair to the young Bavarian, who came to America as a subaltern in the Royal Deux-Ponts and was soon attached to Rochambeau's staff, to state

that the diary* in which this incident is recorded was never intended for the general public, but solely for the amusement and edification of the family circle at home. It contains boyish accounts of a number of incidents which doubtless the young officer would have omitted could he have foreseen the wide publicity his narrative would enjoy in later years.

Be this as it may, as described by de Closen, the incident occurred as follows: With a number of French officers, including Vauban, Berthier, and Dumas, he was riding at the head of a detachment of American dragoons along the north side of the Haarlem River within the confines of the manor of Morrisania. Soon they fell in with and drove off a picket of British irregulars, probably Delancey's force. These men found shelter in the Morris house where a much larger force than the French expected was concealed. The French were stopped, and when a battery from Montrésor's (afterward Randall's) Island opened on them, the scouting party was compelled to retire. Several soldiers were wounded and Dumas' horse was killed under him. All were withdrawing in haste through the orchard when, as Closen wrote, "my hat caught in a branch and fell to the ground. We were under a very heavy musketry fire from the house," he continues, "and I had gone on for some yards before I bethought me of the derisive military expression to describe a hasty, inglorious retreat. *O! là là! Il a perdu son chapeau* [He has lost his hat]. I determined this should not be said of me, so I turned my horse about, picked up my hat under the heavy fire concentrated upon me, and only then rejoined my comrades. General Washington who saw it all from a distance expressed to me his high approval of my conduct though he added that the saying as to the hat is not known in the American Army."

The letter to Lund Washington was not the only missive during the campaign which fell into unfriendly hands and plagued the writer. A day or two after the conference with Rochambeau at the Webb house in Weathersfield, Washington opened his heart to General Sullivan, who had withdrawn from the Army and was now a member of the Continental Congress. Washington told Sullivan that

*While this diary has apparently never been published *in toto*, many extracts from it appeared during the centennial year of 1881 in the *American Magazine of History*. Several transcripts and translations have been made, and one is available in the MS. Division, Library of Congress.

he had heard from de Grasse that in due season he would appear not merely off the American coast but "off Sandy Hook," and that messengers should be there from Congress to assist the French fleet with information and supplies. It has been intimated that this letter was possibly written not to enlighten Sullivan but to mislead Clinton. Be this as it may, when the intercepted letter reached the British general it certainly strengthened his belief that he was in greater need of reinforcements than was Cornwallis in Virginia, and a few days later the order was issued detaching several battalions from the Southern army and bringing them to New York by sea—a misstep which figured largely in the Clinton-Cornwallis controversy which flourished and, indeed, raged, for many years after the war was over.

There was still another intercepted letter which shows not only how alert the British patrols were but, what is more important, the manner of man Rochambeau was. This letter came from the polished pen of Chastellux, the soldier-academician. It was addressed to his good friend the French consul in Philadelphia, and in it the chevalier indulged in a very frank, and probably wholly unfair, comparison between Washington and the French general, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter. For the legitimate war purpose of sowing discord among the Allies the British arranged to turn the letter over to Rochambeau. When he read it, by all accounts he had one of the not infrequent *bourrasques*, of which the letter complained. He immediately sent for the chevalier, handed him the letter, and asked for an explanation. The chevalier said he had written it, that he was sorry because it had given pain, and then awaited the things that were to be expected. When a brigade commander spoke of a lieutenant general in such terms a court of inquiry, even a court-martial, loomed on the horizon. But here there was an awkward silence. Then, to break it, the chevalier said, "Here is the letter." "Yes," answered the general, taking it, "I want to put it where it belongs," and with that he threw it into the fire. From this time on the relations of the two officers whose experiences and surroundings had been so very different became closer, and in the end they were characterized by mutual confidence and affection.

Of course it cannot be insisted upon too often that Washington, with his usual good judgment, wished to attack the enemy at New

York. Success there would obviously end the war, while victory elsewhere could not be decisive. In the empire city that was to be the British had concentrated their largest army and there was the best anchorage for the fleet. Here also great stores of war munitions had been accumulated. The capture of this stronghold would prove a knockout blow, and his persistent scouting and reconnoitering of the vicinity throughout July clearly indicated how the Commander in Chief longed to attempt this capital stroke.

His frank entry in the journal of August 1 made quite plain why the long-cherished plan was abandoned and why de Grasse decided on the Virginia campaign after Cornwallis had been driven toward the Chesapeake. How reluctantly Washington abandoned the greater project. The boats were there to embark the troops, "ordnance (heavy) has been brought to East River," and then he added, August 1, "Everything would have been in perfect readiness to commence the operations against New York if the States had furnished their quotas of Men agreeably to my requisitions—But so far have they been from complying with these; that of the first not more than half the number asked of them have joined the Army; and of 6,200 of the latter, pointedly and continually called for to be with the army by the 15th of last month, only 176 had arrived from Connecticut and two companies of York levies—about 80 men. Thus circumstanced and having little more than general assurances of getting the succours called for, I could scarce see a ground upon which to continue my preparations against New York and therefore (especially as there was much reason to believe that part at least of the Troops in Va. [British, of course] were recalled to New York), I turned my Views more seriously (than I had before done) to an operation to the Southward."

In a few days the situation grew even more unpleasant for Washington. An immediate decision had to be made. M. de Barras, in command of the French fleet at Newport, advised him that de Grasse expected to leave Cap François (now Cap-Haitien) with twenty-nine sail of the line and three thousand and two hundred land troops on the third of the month for Chesapeake Bay for a stay of six weeks. In his quandary Washington made this illuminating confidence in his journal, under date of August 4: "Matters having now come to a Crisis—and a decisive Plan to be determined on—I was obliged,

from the shortness of Count de Grasse's promised Stay on this coast [from] the apparent unwillingness of their naval officers to force the harbour of New Yqrk, and the feeble compliance of the States to my requisitions for men, hitherto, and little prospect of greater exertion in the future, to give up all idea of attacking New York and instead thereof to remove the French Troops and a detachment from the American Army to the Head of Elk, to be transported to Virginia for the purpose of co-operating with the force from the West Indies against the Troops (Brit.) in that State."

Before this decision was reached, as his journal reveals, Washington lived through many hours of perplexity. Hamilton thought the march South was a wild-goose chase, and said so. Cornwallis would make his escape to the Carolinas before sufficient forces to cope with him could be assembled. Then it was clear the second essay in military co-operation between the Allies, the demonstration in front of New York, was a failure—not so flagrant a failure as the Rhode Island campaign, for which American opinion, perhaps unjustly, still blamed d'Estaing, but a failure it was none the less. Washington was depressed. The outlook for successful co-operation with the Allies was far from bright, but he did not throw up his hands. He studied the situation with which he was confronted, apportioned the blame for what had happened fairly, kept his opinions to himself, and determined that he and not the British would profit by his experience. If he could not accomplish what he wanted to do he would concentrate his energies on the next best thing, on what was possible with the means at his command. If he failed at least he would see soon again his beloved Mount Vernon, so in August he wrote to Martha, "It is ten to one that our Views will be disappointed by Cornwallis returning to South Carolina by land. At all events our operations will be over by the end of Oct. & I will fly to my home. Don't mention I am going to Virginia."

The French officers were reticent in regard to whatever disagreement there may have been between Washington and Rochambeau as to the objectives of the campaign they were planning—all except a certain M. Desandrouins, colonel of engineers, who had served with Montcalm in the Canadian campaign. This officer, although apparently well beyond the age for active service, was selected for the American expedition because of his knowledge of the country.

He was a native of Verdun, and in that fortress city his *Papiers* were published, or perhaps republished, by the Abbé Gabriel in 1887. He dwelt at some length on the differences between the American and the French generals in the days of delay and evident indecision in front of New York. He affirmed that there was "sharp disagreement between them as to whether they should go after Cornwallis or attack New York," and that, finally, "Rochambeau had to emphasize that de Grasse was not under his [Washington's] orders before he could bring him to terms." Evidently the Canadian campaigner feared that his statement would be disputed, as it had been, for he added, "I put this all down the moment M. Rochambeau told me about it."

Rochambeau denied these rumors with some heat and also the long-lived lie that Washington's letter to Sullivan was written for no other purpose than to mislead Clinton to cause him to draw all the troops that could be moved toward New York for fear it was about to be attacked. "This great man," he said, "is in no need of fiction such as this to pass on his fame to posterity." Then follows the statement in his memoirs which, had it been published earlier (they did not appear until 1808), would have definitely settled the matter. "At this time he [Washington] had the strongest desire to attack New York, and we would have carried out this operation if the enemy had continued to send detachments away from New York and if the French Navy had been able to support us."

At long last the slow-sailing *Concorde* was back from the West Indies, with a letter from Cap-Haitien dated July 8, 1781, bringing the first definite and direct word from de Grasse since his arrival in American waters. In this communication to Rochambeau the admiral said:

"M. de Lillencourt has taken command of Santo Domingo Island and has agreed to furnish the contingent of 3,000 men and the field and siege guns. They will sail on August 13 directly to the Chesapeake. The Santo Domingo colony had no money, but I will send a frigate to Havana in quest of it, and you may depend upon receiving this amount [one million two hundred thousand livres]." Then he goes on to say that, as neither he nor Saint-Simon, commanding the land forces, could remain after October 15, "I shall be greatly

obliged if you will employ me promptly and effectively within that time, whether against the naval or the land forces of our enemy." The admiral then explained the reason why the troops he was bringing were at his disposal for such a short time. "They have been allocated to the Spaniards," he wrote, "and are under the orders of the Spanish generals."

Heartened by this great news, which is immediately communicated to him by Rochambeau, Washington sent on copies of the dispatch to Lafayette (in Virginia) and urged him now to take up such positions as would make it impossible for Cornwallis to retreat to the Carolinas.

How exceedingly short of funds the French were at this juncture is plainly revealed in a report of M. de Tarle, the intendant, whose functions seem to have combined those of quartermaster and paymaster general. Writing to the perplexed Rochambeau, he says: "The cash that remains in the military chest at this moment will only suffice for the needs of the army until the 20th of August next, and it will only last that long if the sutlers continue to be able to pay for what they buy with drafts." Only a few days later the intendant wrote again to M. de Rochambeau and, with considerable emphasis, urged him to demand financial succor and support from the French naval authorities in the Antilles. He asked him to borrow from these fortunately affluent people "up to the sum of 1,200,000 livres *en espèces*," in "hard" money, which could later on, he explained, "be repaid to them, together with the cost of the transaction and the loss on exchange by drafts on M. de Serilly, general paymaster in Paris." The intendant ended his appeal for a loan by the blunt statement, "Sufficient money to buy the many things the army needs cannot be obtained at any price in this region of America."⁴

It cannot be established that in helping Washington in the generous manner Rochambeau now proposed he knew that he was helping himself and securing valuable support for the French Army. As a matter of fact, the contrary seems to have been his impression, for on the eleventh of June Rochambeau wrote a letter to de Grasse in the West Indies which revealed almost complete discouragement as regards American activity and support. He may have been mistaken,

⁴Archives Hist. Guerre, 3734-16.

but it is quite clear that in his judgment little reliance was to be based on the efficient co-operation of the Continental Army in the approaching campaign. Certainly this is the impression clearly conveyed by the letter to the French admiral, whose intelligent and informed co-operation was so indispensable.

"I should not conceal from you, M. l'Amiral, that these people are at the very end of their resources or that Washington will not have at his disposal half the number of troops he counted upon having. While he is secretive on this subject I believe that at present he has not more than 6,000 men all told, that M. de La Fayette has not 1,000 regular troops with him and with these and the militia he has to defend Virginia and probably about this same number of men are on the march down there to join him. [This is a reference to Wayne's division, which was delayed for such a long time on the journey South from lack of funds.]

"General Greene made an advance on Camden where he was repulsed, and I am quite ignorant of when or how he will unite with M. de Lafayette. It is therefore of the greatest importance that you bring on board your ships as many men as you can find room for. From four to five thousand would not be a man too many."⁵

When the zero hour of the Revolution came, Washington found himself in great embarrassment. Then, as now, an army marched on its stomach, but to supply food and provender money is required, and it would appear that even patriots "give nothing for nothing and—little for sixpence." "Soured by impress," as Washington wrote, he did not dare "to confiscate more supplies from the country folk." As a matter of fact, there was very little food that could be made available, even by strong-arm methods. In the Continental treasury there was not a "continental" that would make a metallic ring. In this quandary Washington called to his camp Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, and Richard Peters, the secretary of the Board of War. He explained his dilemma, and these gentlemen did what they could. The printing presses were put to work and more fiat money was produced, but no one wanted it, and the absolutely necessary supplies were not forthcoming.

Some of the troops were near mutiny, and none of the men from the Northern states wished to go South. Writing to the Superin-

⁵Archives Hist. Guerre, 3734.

tendent of Finance [Morris] at this time, Washington exposed his predicament with great insistence.*

"I must entreat you, if possible, to procure one month's pay in specie for the detachment under my command. Part of the troops have not been paid anything for a long time past and have upon several occasions shown marks of great discontent. The service they are going upon is disagreeable to the Northern regiments; but I make no doubt that a *douceur* of a little hard money would put them in proper temper. If the whole sum cannot be obtained, a part of it will be better than none, as it may be distributed in proportion to the respective wants and claims of the men."

All Morris could do, worker of miracles though he had proved himself to be on many occasions, was to set the presses going again, making Congress money, and to promise "hard" money for October—or maybe November.

Washington now sadly revealed his financial situation to Rochambeau. Everything was ready for the march South except the one thing that harsh experience had taught was absolutely indispensable. Poor Rochambeau had his troubles too. Little money had reached him since his arrival in America. He presumed it had been sent out to him but had been captured by the alert British cruisers. They were all in the same boat, and must pull or sink together.

Rochambeau sent for his treasurer, and together they examined the meager war chest. It contained coin in French livres which totaled forty thousand gold dollars in American money. Of this he turned half, or twenty thousand dollars (one hundred thousand ducats is the sum stated), over to Washington, who agreed to return the amount in October, at which time, unless other money supplies had arrived, the French Army would also be in need.

So it may be said without exaggeration that the Continental Army started upon the Yorktown campaign on a shoestring, and that the shoestring was supplied by the French war chest. This sum which the French general mentions as "one hundred thousand ducats" and the million that was supplied Saint-Simon to pay his troops by the "ladies of Havana" (the Spanish treasury at that place being

*Ford's *Washington*.

empty)' may, with truth, be regarded as the "bottom dollars" upon which the edifice of American independence was erected.

Washington had long since decided to cross the Hudson at King's Ferry, and he wrote at this time to his friend, Fitzhugh, in Virginia, "It is the best, indeed for us the only passing of the river below the Highlands," adding in language unusually picturesque: "It lies at the foot of the western slope of Stony Point where there are heavy boulders of granite rock, scatterings of glaciers of long ago, long spent."

The Commander in Chief had for some time been busy constructing rafts and in assembling all the longboats available. He had also mounted upon wheels thirty flatboats, as much, he relates in his journal, "to deceive the enemy as to be useful in Virginia."

Even then, as Deux-Ponts confided to his diary, the French did not know where they were going. For them the crossing of the Hudson was "exceedingly tedious" and a difficult operation. They were hampered by the heavy guns, the siege trains, and the cavalry horses; and they were all impressed with the immense breadth of the river. The French were quite certain that General Clinton in New York would endeavor to strike at this embarrassing moment, and a division of the American Army awaited under arms the British advance, which, fortunately, never took place.

Washington was fully aware that he had days of forced marches before him and also that not all the troops he had with him were famous marchers. He had good reason to know that many of the troops did not want to go South, fast or slow. He told General Lincoln that from now on his men "were to consider themselves as light troops who are always supposed to be fit for immediate action," and that they should free themselves from every encumbrance which might interfere with activity of movement."

Fortunately, Blanchard was at the crossing of the river, the Rubicon over which, as so many of his own officers thought, Washington was being lured upon a wild-goose chase. Fortunately, also at this critical moment the commissary had nothing to say about firewood or the other details of his unenviable job of supplying the French contingent. Indeed, he rose to the occasion, and described the events of August 24 and 25, 1781, in a striking manner.

¹Letter of de Grasse from Matanzas.

"We finished crossing on the 25th. It was long, because the river is wide and had to be crossed on rafts. I was there on the 25th and saw most of the troops and baggage pass. General Washington was also there; they had arranged for him a time schedule of the crossing which he examined with the closest attention. He seemed to see in this crossing, in the march to the Chesapeake, in the union with M. de Grasse, the dawn of a more favorable day, and it came just at the moment when the American cause, with resources exhausted, had the greatest need of a success to uplift hope and courage. He pressed my hand with much affection as he left me and crossed the river by himself at about two o'clock to rejoin his troops, who had gone ahead.

"He (Washington) has the gift of making himself beloved. It is his merit that has defended the liberty of America, and, if one day they enjoy it fully, they will owe it to him."

On another page he wrote: "they owe their victory to the courage of Washington, to his love of country, and to his prudence. He was never discouraged; in the midst of success or defeat he was always calm; it was his personal qualities that kept the men under arms rather than the decrees of Congress."

Despite his daily cares and constant and harassing occupations as chief commissary, it is quite clear that M. Blanchard kept his eyes open while in America.

Closen was also present when the "ragged Continentals" crossed the Hudson on the first stage of the journey to the Chesapeake. In his diary he wrote: "I here had the pleasure of viewing the American Army, each individual man. These brave fellows made one's heart ache. It is almost unbelievable! For the most part they were almost without clothes. They only had trousers and a little coat, or jacket, of linen. The greater number were without socks." He dwells at length upon the deplorable situation of the gallant fellows who still followed Washington. He is "horrified at their emaciated condition and amazed at their unwavering fortitude." (His emotions were very similar to ours when in July 1898 what remained of the ragged Cuban army limped past us in the review at Aserradero, which General García had ordered in honor of the newly arrived American leaders, General Shafter and Admiral Sampson, while out at sea, but in plain view, floated the innumerable transports which had at last

brought to Cuba the rescuing army.) Deux-Ponts was frankly amazed at the lethargy which Clinton displayed at this time. "An enemy, a little bold and able," he wrote, "would have seized the moment of our crossing the Hudson, so favorable for him, so embarrassing for us, for an attack. His indifference and lethargy at this moment is an enigma that cannot be solved by me."⁸

For several days after the Hudson was behind them every possible device was adopted to deceive the enemy as to the destination of the Allied armies. To all appearances the forces were concentrating at a little village called Chatham, about four miles inland from Staten Island. Here a great show was made of erecting baking ovens, of collecting forage, and of building small boats to cross the rivers. Then an unfortunate detachment was sent out on a long march, pounding its way over the heavy sand dunes toward Sandy Hook. In a word, nothing was left undone to keep General Clinton preoccupied with the defense of New York.

Among the French officers there was much diversity of opinion as to how Clinton would act in the circumstances. Their diaries betray them, and they all guessed wrong. Not one of the young officers who wrote of these events thought for a moment that the British general would sit still. It is only fair to say that he made many plans. Advised as to how weak a force had been left behind in Rhode Island, Clinton did plan an attack there upon Barras, and with the aid of Admiral Graves he hoped to capture the French squadron. But he was slow, and Barras had slipped out and sailed South to join de Grasse before the sluggish Graves got under way. As a matter of fact, Clinton contented himself with continuing his depredations along the New England coast and giving all the countenance and support he could to the atrocities of the traitor Arnold in Connecticut. There came a moment when he talked of taking West Point in the Highlands, where General Heath had been left behind with fifteen skeleton regiments. But for many days Clinton was quite certain that Washington was moving against Paulus Hook (now Jersey City), and accordingly he made the arrangements which he thought suitable. When Washington and Rochambeau finally rode into Philadelphia and there was no further doubt of their destination, he did nothing but send a warning letter to Cornwallis.

⁸Deux-Ponts, p. 41.

Three days after the passing of the Hudson, when the French troops were at Bullion's Tavern and the right column of the Americans close to Bound Brook, New Jersey, formal orders for the march South were issued. For the hundred and thirty miles from King's Ferry to Philadelphia the itinerary of the Allied armies can be followed on the remarkable map of Erskine, the topographer of the Continental Army; but Clozen's account of it is rather confusing. He was probably confused himself. He is certain, however, that they marched along the Ramapo River and through the Ramapo hills. The French were most enthusiastic about the countryside, which they reported was "well cultivated by Hollanders, who are quite rich," and they greatly admired the profusion of peach trees and the summer apples in which the orchards abounded. They visited Totowa Falls on the Passaic River, and du Bourg noted that the Falls, if not beautiful, "are singular and imposing." He dwelt on the fact that supplies came in, not brought by farmers or hucksters, but by ladies, "with their heads dressed and adorned with jewels, driving their own rustic wagons drawn by spirited horses in double and sometimes triple front."

VII

On to the Chesapeake

THE EXACT DATE when the momentous decision to slip around New York and hasten toward Cornwallis and the Chesapeake was reached is nowhere set down. It probably was a resolution that was formed gradually, as the strength of Clinton's position and the limited numbers of the Allied army became more and more manifest, but it was decided on or before August 16, for on that day Rochambeau wrote to the War Minister in Versailles that he was starting South. "The garrison of New York," he adds by way of explanation, "is between 11 & 12 thousand men. Even with the small reinforcement that Saint-Simon brings we can do nothing against that place. Consequently we are leaving for the Head of Elk, Washington and myself with the French Division and the two thousand Americans he may be able to add to it. The rest (of the Americans) will guard West Point."

In the critical days that now confronted the Allied armies the order of march was as follows: Separated into two columns, the American wing held the van. The light infantry and the First New York, under Lincoln, kept to the left by the way of Paramus and encamped on the twenty-seventh at Springfield, New Jersey. The American column on the right, with the artillery and the baggage, marched to Chatham by way of Pompton.

The French contingent also marched in two divisions, with an interval of a day's march between them, as they had done for the greater part of the journey to the Hudson. They reached Whippany on the twenty-sixth, and both armies rested on the twenty-seventh

and twenty-eighth in and around Chatham, still within striking distance of the enemy on Manhattan Island. The Second New York followed the French, and behind them were drawn the thirty "batteaux on wheels" for the purpose of convincing Clinton that the attack on New York had not been abandoned and also, doubtless, with the thought that later on they might prove serviceable.

On the twenty-ninth the march was resumed by different roads, and it was only on the following day, when the columns headed directly toward Princeton and Trenton, that all idea of concealing the Virginia objective was abandoned. The secret had been unusually well kept. Fersen, though at the moment confidential aide to Rochambeau, admitted that up to this point he was in ignorance of the destination of the Army, and Colonel Deux-Ponts said that he was no wiser. Even Dr. Thacher, the surgeon of the American light troops, confessed he only began to suspect they were bound for the Chesapeake when Princeton was left behind.

At this juncture Clinton divined for the first time the plan and warned Cornwallis, but did little else. As he afterward said in his defense: "When informed of his march [Washington's] I could not have passed an army in time to make any impression on him before he crossed the Delaware." It is quite clear that he did not have sufficient troops at his disposal to follow the Allied army South, and at the same time leave a large enough garrison in New York to safeguard it from possible attack.

All pretense of misleading the scouts of the enemy being now discarded, the troops were pushed on more rapidly, with the Americans still in the van. At the Delaware the first disappointment awaited Washington. Instead of the expected ample water transportation for both armies, there were available here only boats enough to take to Wilmington two regiments, the batteaux on wheels, and some of the artillery.

Leaving Lincoln in command of the American column and Viomesnil in charge of the French division, Washington and Rochambeau, a prey to many anxieties, hurried ahead. They could hardly suppose that Cornwallis would await their coming for weeks, or that Lafayette with his scanty force could hold him in the trap until the long land journey of the Allied army—which now seemed inevitable—was completed. It is certain that as they rode along the

far from splendid roads Rochambeau became convinced that quick water transportation was now indispensable to the success of the great venture upon which they were embarked.

Hastening ahead of the troops, Washington and Rochambeau reached the suburbs of Philadelphia about noon on the thirtieth. Here they were met and escorted into town by the famous Light Horse Troop of the Quaker City. Robert Morris, the "Financier of the Revolution," and other leading citizens were on hand to greet the distinguished guests as they dismounted at the City Tavern. In his diary Morris stated that they were received with "the universal acclamation of the citizens," and that "many gentlemen called to pay their respects." "The general then adjourned to my house," Morris added, "with his suite, Count de Rochambeau, the Chevalier de Chastellux, Generals Knox, Moultrie, and others, where they dined." The financier described in great detail how the patriotic toasts of the hour were duly honored—how the King of France, the King of Spain, the United Provinces of The Netherlands, and the Allied armies were toasted, many libations poured, and hopes expressed for "the speedy arrival of the Count de Grasse and his fleet." In the evening the city was illuminated and Washington and his suite walked through many of the principal streets, cheered by the throngs of patriots.

The Continental Army came in on the afternoon of September 2. The weather was warm and sultry. There had been no rain for days and, according to Thacher,¹ "our weary foot-soldiers raised great clouds of dust which was a pity, as the ladies were viewing us from the windows of every house as we passed through this splendid city. The American column extended for two miles." It was headed by "the general officers and their aides in rich military uniforms, mounted on noble steeds, elegantly caparisoned, followed by servants and baggage. In the rear of every brigade were several fieldpieces and ammunition wagons. The soldiers marched in slow and solemn step regulated by the drum and fife."

Unhappily the question of back pay now arose again, but whoever may have been to blame, certainly the long-unpaid soldiers were not at fault. A request for at least a small advance of the pay in arrears was made directly to Congress, and Washington, as al-

¹His diary.

ways, supported the plea most warmly. The delicate matter was arranged, but how it was done is not quite clear. Washington, however, announced that one month's pay was to be forthcoming immediately for all the troops except those who, "lost to all sense of honor, the pride of their profession, and the love of their country, had deserted the Standard of Freedom at this critical moment." As soon as the pay rolls were made out, the paymasters appeared in the camps, and the faithful were rewarded with a little "hard" money. The record shows that, with the consent of Rochambeau, the money was borrowed from the intendant of the French Army, but whether it was a new transaction or merely the conclusion of the loan that had been arranged at King's Ferry, before the Army began the march South, is not stated.²

This entry into Philadelphia, the capital of the loose confederacy, was of course the high point of the march South. Chastellux, an intelligent observer, said: "The arrival of the French troops on September the 4th was in the nature of a triumph." He described their appearance in a most amusing manner: "The troops made a halt about a mile from the city, and in an instant," he writes, "were dressed as elegantly as ever were the soldiers of a garrison on a day of royal review. They then marched through the town with military music playing, which is always particularly pleasing to the Americans. The streets were crowded with people, and the ladies appeared at the windows in their most splendid attire. All Philadelphia was astonished to see people who had endured the fatigues of a long journey so ruddy and so handsome."

Du Bourg, who always showed a marked partiality for the Soissonais regiment, said that in the march through Philadelphia they wore their coats with rose-colored facings, "and their grenadier caps with white and rose-colored feathers, which struck with astonishment the beauties of the city."

Watson,³ who was certainly present, was more restrained. He simply states: "Philadelphia was gratified with the imposing spectacle of a French army in fine style of military array, consisting of six thousand men. They came down Front Street, passed up Vine

²Gouverneur Morris, later Ambassador to France, was the helpful intermediary in this transaction.

³Annals, Vol. II, p. 328.

Street and encamped on the Commons at the Centre Square. They were fine-looking men, all in white uniforms. They were under the command of General Rochambeau, on their way to Yorktown.

"The troops next marched in single file past the assembled Congress, and then into camp on the large plain near the river," Du Bourg continues. "The next day the Soissonais regiment gave an exhibition exercise of the manual of arms. At least 20,000 persons and a vast number of carriages, remarkable for their elegance, added to the luster of this exhibition, which was fortunately heightened by the pleasantness of the situation and the remarkable serenity of the day. The skill and rapidity of the military exercises and the soldierly appearance of the troops in general surprised and enraptured the spectators. The President of Congress, the Hon. Thomas McKean, in a suit of black velvet, honored this review with his presence. These honest Pennsylvanians differ very strikingly from us in the ceremonial of dress as we differ from them again in our modes of legislation. Be this as it may, the spectators did not hesitate to declare that such soldiers as ours were invincible."

After the famous review, which still lives in legend and in story among the old families of Philadelphia, M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne received his countrymen, as Chastellux maintains, "with the dignity and generosity of the representative of a great Monarch," and then invited all the ranking officers to dine with him. Unfortunately Washington and Rochambeau, having gone on ahead, were not present.

"Hardly were we seated at the table," wrote Chastellux, "when an Express arrived and a disquieting silence immediately seized upon every guest. Our eyes were fixed on the Minister. What could the news be? Would he communicate it to us? Then he opened the envelope that had been brought in and read: 'Thirty-six ships of the Line, commanded by M. le Comte de Grasse, have arrived in the Chesapeake. Three thousand soldiers have been landed and are now in communication with the Marquis de La Fayette.'

"Joy and good humor immediately resumed their place upon every countenance," wrote Chastellux, "and our impatient leaders began to count the hours before they would have it in their power to face the enemy. Healths were next drunk, and, of course, that of the French Minister of the Marine, whose activity and great ability have

paved the way to the brilliant successes of the fleet, was repeated. The presence with us of his son," added Chastellux, "M. de Charlus, Second Colonel of the Saintonge regiment, of course added greatly to our pleasure and satisfaction."

The good Abbé Robin, who was also a participant in the festivities, makes it quite plain that he did not like the "long black coat" which the president of Congress wore, when everybody else sported garments of many colors; but we cannot quarrel with his concluding comment: "The worthy Pennsylvanians," he wrote, "are as far below the French in etiquette as the French are below them in the Science of Legislation."

Of course the great news spread rapidly through the city. Many illuminated their houses, according to Chastellux, and others went racing through the streets making even the quietest precincts of the city ring with shouts of joy. He added: "Some merry fellows, mounted on scaffolds and platforms, pronounced funeral orations over Cornwallis and mimicked the lamentations of the Tories. Then the people gathered together in great crowds and moved to the residence of the Minister of France, where they stood for a long time shouting, 'Long Live Louis the Sixteenth!'"

With the news came another letter, addressed to Rochambeau, from du Portail, who had been sent on ahead when the American contingent started South. "Hurry, hurry," he wrote, "come quickly! Come quickly, not that we have the slightest wish or the remotest intention to take York without you. We shall content ourselves, and that will be glory enough, if we are successful, to prepare the way for victory and to prevent as far as possible the enemy from assembling further means of defense."⁴

Many hours before the news arrived, Washington and Rochambeau, who at the moment were more interested in boats than in banquets, pushed out along the road to Chester and to Head of Elk as soon as it was possible to escape the courtesies of Congress and the hospitality of the citizens. It was confidently expected that in one or the other of these places ample shipping to carry the troops to the James had been assembled. Washington cherished the hope that "certain gentlemen on the Eastern Shore"⁵ (of Maryland), to whom

⁴Archives Hist. Guerre 3734.

⁵Ford's *Writings of Washington*.

he had written asking for "their privately held boats," would come to his aid in this hour of great need. Express after express was sent to these old friends at their seats on the Chester and the Choptank rivers, on the Wye and the Severn, asking for assistance, for the vessels that must be forthcoming. Urgent indeed was the language used. The Commander in Chief "beseeches them to exert themselves."

As they rode out of Philadelphia, Washington and Rochambeau became separated. Each was busy with the many details of the march and intent upon heartening their troops, who were suffering from the great heat and the terrible conditions of the roads, with worse ahead of them. How they came together again Rochambeau tells in his memoirs:

"When I reached Chester," he wrote, "I caught sight of General Washington waving his hat at me with demonstrative gestures of the greatest joy. When I rode up to him he explained he had just received a dispatch from Baltimore, informing him that de Grasse had arrived in the Chesapeake with 28 ships of the Line and Lauzun, who was also present, said, 'I never saw a man more thoroughly and openly delighted than was General Washington at this moment.'"

This, at last, was news that the general did not keep to himself. He immediately issued a bulletin⁶ to the Army with the announcement which read: "The General anticipates the glorious events which may be expected from the combined operations now in contemplation. As no circumstance could possibly happen more opportunely in point of time, no prospect would ever have promised more opportunely of success. Nothing but want of exertion can blast the pleasing prospect before us." Then this touching appeal: "The General calls upon the gentlemen officers, the brave and faithful soldiers he has the honor to command, to exert their utmost abilities in the cause of their country, to share with him, with their usual alacrity, the difficulties, dangers and glory of the enterprise."

Fortunately Colonel Deux-Ponts was also a witness to this dramatic scene, and he wrote in his field notes: "I was surprised and affected by the great and true joy which General Washington showed. Of a natural coldness and a noble approach, which so well adorns the chief of a whole nation, his features, his whole bearing

⁶Headquarters. Head of Elk, September 6, 1781.

and deportment were now changed in an instant. For the moment he put aside his character as arbiter of North America and contented himself with that of a citizen happy beyond measure at the good fortune of his country."

Still the problem of how to reach Virginia and to support Lafayette, the French contingent, and the Virginia militia, in preventing the escape of Cornwallis from his precarious position, remained unsolved. The shipping offered at this port on the Delaware (Chester) was as disappointing as had been the Philadelphia experience. It was only possible to embark here another thousand men. The rest, including guns, cavalry, and train, were obliged to push on by land. Rochambeau was frankly pessimistic now, but Washington hoped on. Surely ships would be awaiting them at the Head of Elk or in Baltimore. Was it not a known fact that East and West, North and South, the Baltimore privateers were preying upon British commerce scattered over the seven seas?

Bad news arrived by courier only a few miles short of the historic village at the head of Chesapeake navigation. The Eastern Shore men had done what they could, but, as they admitted, this was not much. All, or nearly all, their "pungies" had been sunk or captured by the British raiders, and for the first time in generations the "Shore" men were traveling overland. Doggedly the dusty horsemen pushed on, and their first view of the placid waters of the Elk also embraced the sight of a little dispatch boat, strangely rigged, not after Bay fashion, dropping anchor off shore.

While they waited and wondered what manner of craft the new arrival might be, the captain was put ashore and announced himself to Washington as M. de Saint Césaire. The credentials which he presented from de Grasse introduced him as "Capitaine de Pavillon de Mon Armée, whom I have sent forward to announce to General Washington the measures I am taking to facilitate his arrival."

Washington could hardly contain his joy. This, at least, was not a phantom fleet like that of Guichen! There in the river was a little pinnace—it was hardly more than that—but what news it brought! Only two days before it had left the great fleet of line-of-battle ships and stately frigates anchored in Virginia waters!

For all the good news, the lack of shipping here was still a stern reality and a heavy handicap. Only the small advanced detachments

of both columns could be embarked. M. de Custine was placed in command of the French contingent, and General Lincoln of the American. The French vanguard was composed of the grenadier and chasseur companies of all the French regiments, together with the infantry of Lauzun's legion—twelve hundred men in all. Lincoln took with him eight hundred men, apparently all light infantry.

The other detachments of both armies now pushed on to the Susquehanna, where difficulties were expected and were soon encountered. Colonel Dumas, in charge of the crossing, found sufficient small boats to put the infantry across at this, the so-called Lower Ferry; but hearing that the water was unusually low, and that there was a ford seven miles up the river, he sent the artillery and the wagons up along the river road. It was apparently not much of a ford, but finally everything was rafted across with but few accidents. However, as a result, there was considerable delay, and the heavy baggage did not catch up with the marching columns until they had been in Baltimore several days, and the French particularly suffered from short rations.

(While today it is a region of unsurpassed resources, in the *Mercur de France* for September 1782 a distressing account was given of the bareness of the country and of the hardships the French were called upon to endure from want of supplies on the journey South, especially as they drew near to the Susquehanna. On the authority of an officer of the expeditionary force, the *Mercur* states: "This region resembles more a desert than a country fit for human habitation. All that could be procured, and this only with the greatest difficulty, were a few bees. We would cook half of them and the rest would be salted down. To make up for this scant ration, each officer and man alike was given a pound of cheese, a little rum, and a provision of biscuits for seventeen days.")

At the Head of Elk, the first halt on Maryland soil, while Washington was again disappointed with the meager water transportation available, General Gist brought good news—not about boats, but about men. His good friends Thomas Johnson and Sims Lee, who had followed each other in quick succession as the first and second governors of Maryland, were not the kind of men who received with indifference Washington's desperate appeals for soldiers that he had sent out from Weathersfield "under flying seals." Gist told him that the three new Maryland regiments of the line were ready,

that they numbered eighteen hundred men, that they were fine fellows, the sons and brothers of the men who had died at Long Island, at Haarlem Heights, White Plains, Germantown, Monmouth Courthouse, and down South at Camden.

"They are young, terribly young," said Gist, "but they are lions' whelps and now they are under way. Some are riding, some are sailing, some are walking; they will be there, General, before you are."

This great news gave the general pause as well as joy. How time flies! So the sons of the brave fellows he had seen dying in an attempt to save the Army on Long Island in 1776 were going to the front. Five years! He told Gist that he was determined to stop off at Mount Vernon, if only for an hour, to see for the first time the four grandchildren of Martha Washington, who had been born since he had taken the field.

As to the movements of the Commander in Chief during the critical days that followed, we fortunately have the precise, if somewhat laconic, entries in the journal to guide us. On September 15 Washington wrote:

"Judging it highly expedient to be with the Army in Virginia as soon as possible, to make the necessary arrangements for the Siege, I determined to set out for the Camp of the Marquis de la Fayette without loss of time, & accordingly, in company with the Count de Rochambeau who requested to attend me & the Chevalier de Chastellux, set out on the 8th for Baltimore where I received and answered an address of the Citizens. September 9th; I reached my own seat at Mount Vernon, distant 120 miles from the Head of Elk, where I staid until the 12th, & in three days thereafter, that is on the 15th, reached Williamsburg."

The infantry columns did not make such rapid progress. Most unfortunately, at this tense moment Baltimore could not live up to its maritime reputation. Here, too, the British gunboats had swept the bay and adjacent waters of even the smallest craft. Deux-Ponts and the Marquis de Leval were ordered by General Viomesnil, now the ranking officer with the French division, to examine carefully the boats that had been collected, in the hope that some, at least, would be found suitable.

³Gist Papers, Maryland Historical Society. Letter to Samuel Purviance, May 2, 1782.

"We saw at a glance," wrote Deux-Ponts, "that embarkation in boats such as these was impossible. As Count de Rochambeau had already gone on to Virginia, General Viomesnil insisted that we make the attempt, and this we did on the morning of the 13th, and then Baron V. satisfied himself that it was impossible to expose our soldiers to such a long voyage in the cramped quarters which was all the little boats furnished. I must say they were unworthily equipped from every point of view and, had we persisted in embarking, our expedition would have been exposed to great risks."

Apparently there was nothing left to do but continue the long journey to Virginia by land, and the next day the Royal Deux-Ponts and the other French regiments forded the upper Patapsco and camped at the foot of the famous Elkridge. But that evening a courier came to their bivouac with stirring news. De Grasse had sent transports and small craft from the fleet up to the Severn to bring the French division to the scene of operations. Twenty-four hours later the delighted foot soldiers, who had had quite enough of walking, were in Annapolis and embarking for the front.

It seems the fate of all decisive battles in world history to be shrouded in mystery as to details, however patent are the results. Such were the struggles at Tours and at Châlons, and the naval battle that had been fought off the Virginia Capes on September 5, 1781, while the Allied army was plodding its way South, is also quite inexplicable, especially if research is confined to the official documents. While the French had a few more ships, and perhaps heavier guns, the British squadrons certainly lined up with a most formidable array of famous admirals. There was Graves, Rear Admiral of the Red; Sir "Sam" Hood, Admiral of the Blue; and Rear Admiral F. S. Drake, also Admiral of the Blue. Between them British supremacy in American waters was lost for a few weeks, and the Yorktown victory not only made possible but even inevitable.

Tucked away in a corner of the *London Gazette* we find what Graves had to say on the momentous subject. His report was dated from his flagship "*London at Sea*, Sept. 14th, 1781," and reads:

"His Majesty's fleet consisted of 19 sail of the Line; that of the French formed 24 Sail in their Line. Somewhat after 4 o'clock (5th of September) the action began among the headmost ships, pretty close, and soon became general. The Van of the enemy bore away to

enable their center to support them or they would have been cut up. The action did not entirely cease till a little after sunset, though at a considerable distance. After night I sent the frigates to the van and rear to push forward the line and keep it extended with the enemy, with a full intention to renew the engagement in the morning; but when the *Fortunée* returned from the van, I was informed that several of the Ships had suffered so much, they were in no condition to renew the action until they had secured their masts."

Graves then stated that "all day, the 6th, the Fleets remained in sight of each other, repairing," and he enumerated the number of his ships that were partially or completely disabled: "The *Terrible* and the *Ajax* especially," he reported, "were in a sinking condition. . . . In the present State of the Fleet and being five Sail less in number than the enemy, and they having advanced very much to the wind during the day, I determined to tack after night to prevent being drawn too far from the Chesapeake, and to stand to the Northward."

On the eleventh he reported that the sinking *Terrible* "was dismantled and set on fire." "I then determined," he concluded, "to follow the Resolution of a Council of War, to proceed with the fleet to New York before the Equinox, and then use every possible means for putting the Ships into the best State for Service." That was indeed a war council that should be gratefully remembered in our annals. Its members contributed powerfully to the founding of the United States of America.

Even Washington, when the news of the sea fight reached him, did not fully appreciate the importance of what had happened. Referring, doubtless, to the fact that not all the vessels of the hostile fleets were engaged, he speaks in his journal of the battle that turned the tide in the affairs of America as "a partial engagement."

Fortunately for the American cause, the want of a good understanding between Clinton and Cornwallis on shore was matched by the discordant views of the British naval officers afloat. Their controversies are not so long-winded and they were not so frequently aired in Parliament as were the charges and countercharges of the soldiers, but the revelations of Sir "Sam" Hood are interesting today as they reveal how near to disaster the Virginia campaign approached at its very inception. On the day after the naval fight Hood

drew up a memorandum which he entitled, "Sentiments upon the Truly Unfortunate Day." He tore into shreds the battle orders of Graves, which prevented Hood from bringing his squadron into the fight. He maintained: "The enemy's van might have been attacked with clear advantage as they [French] came out of the Bay by no means in a regular and connected way. The whole English fleet, all three squadrons, could have been, and should have been, concentrated upon the French van, and that in this case they could have destroyed it. Our rear ships, being barely within random shot, could not render the service they could have done had they been placed more intelligently."

On the afternoon of the sixth, according to Hood, there was a most inharmonious meeting of the three admirals on board the *London*. In view of the number of his ships that were disabled, Graves decided that it would be hazardous to renew the action, and he also, again most fortunately for the American cause, rejected Hood's suggestion, which was to return to the capes of the Chesapeake as fast as they could, destroy the French ships on guard at the mouth of the river, and then take up a position between the capes, after having got in touch with Cornwallis.

As Graves reported, things drifted along until the twelfth, when, according to Sir "Sam," he was consulted again by his senior officer. Asked for his judgment, Hood replied, "Sir Samuel would be very glad to send an opinion, but he really knows not what to say in the truly lamentable state we have brought ourselves." On the following day he wrote: "We should have barred the entrance of the Bay to de Grasse—now he has barred it against us."

There is a *précis* of this mysterious, though decisive, battle still unpublished in the French archives. It was written by the Chevalier de Vaugiraud, who seems to have served de Grasse as flag lieutenant. From it we shall endeavor to extract all the information we can.

"The moment the English fleet was sighted (off the Capes)," he wrote, "the Admiral decided to fight, and at midday the rising tide permitted him to get under way. To do so more expeditiously he ordered all the ships to slip their cables." The chevalier then goes on to say that while the British fleet was more powerful and more numerous than hitherto reported, de Grasse left behind him as he sailed out to battle, charged with the duty of maintaining the block-

ade of the James and the York rivers, some half-a-dozen ships, including such big fellows as the *Triton*, *le Glorieux*, *le Vaillant*, *l'Expériment*, and the frigates *l'Andromaque* and *la Diligente*.

Vaugiraud described the formidable appearance of the British fleet of three squadrons, with the flag of Vice-Admiral Graves flying from the *London*, while Admiral Drake flew his broad pennant from the *Princess*, and Admiral Hood his flag from the *Barfleur*. He added that, through no fault of their own, but because of weather conditions and their lack of speed, only fifteen of the French vessels were really engaged. He then stated that the fighting continued until the fall of darkness and that at this time it was quite evident that many of the enemy ships had been seriously damaged. As to what happened in the next four days, which in all other accounts are left quite blank, the chevalier had this to say: "From the 6th to the 10th our Admiral manœuvred seeking the advantage of the Windward position; it was a difficult movement and not entirely successful because not a few of our ships were poor sailors. On the morning of the 10th, however, the Admiral decided that he would join battle on the following day but with the *Terrible*, the *Montagu*, the *Shrewsbury*, the *Intrepid*, and the *Ajax* still greatly disabled from the battle of the 5th, Admiral Graves withdrew in the night and by morning had set sail for New York."

Rumors of the wildest kind were rife, and it is evident from the dispatches still on file in the archives that the French admiral and his captains were far from realizing that they had fought and won a most decisive battle. In a few hours after Graves disappeared over the horizon it was announced through the American intelligence service that at last Admiral Digby had arrived at New York. This accession of another powerful squadron would give the British a greatly superior fleet, and on this account the return of Graves and the new arrivals to the Chesapeake was hourly expected.

After the council of war in which this information was submitted and discussed (although there was some diversity of opinion among his captains as to their ability to do so), de Grasse decided to hold the capes, to maintain the blockade of Cornwallis, so to dispose of his vessels that at the first sign of the returning British fleet they could, without delay, put out to sea, and, once ample sea room had been secured, seek to meet the enemy on favorable terms.

There is a dispatch from Rochambeau to General Viomesnil in Baltimore, written during his short stay at Mount Vernon, which reveals the great uncertainty that prevailed as to whether the further advance toward the Yorktown peninsula was to be made by land or by water. It also reveals that the generalissimo must have had very little time in which to inspect the fields and discuss the crop prospects with his kinsman and overseer, Lund Washington.

"Orders have been given everywhere," Rochambeau wrote: "to mend the roads and repair the ferries. I confess, my dear Baron, that the state of distress and want in the matter of shipping in which I found Baltimore does not cease to cause me anxiety. I have spoken again to General Washington on the subject, and requested his final orders. He is still firmly of the opinion that it is better for our troops to await in Baltimore the return of the ships of the first convoy rather than to undertake the long land journey which is most difficult."⁸

Rochambeau also described how Mount Vernon was beset with rumors of British corsairs on the rampage in the Chesapeake and ravaging the coast, evidently a great danger to the little flotilla that was on its way down the bay. "But we do not know the truth as to these things. We start tomorrow and should be in Williamsburg on the 14th or the 15th."

They were; and Washington at last was in immediate touch with the Allies who had arrived so opportunely from the West Indies.

When the Maryland troops joined, as General Gist promised they would, after many adventures by land and sea, Washington was delighted, and immediately issued the following Order:

Headquarters, Williamsburg

Sept. 19th

The Inspector General will review the Maryland troops, Friday Morning at eight o'clock. At the same hour he desires to see all the Continental field officers on the Grand Parade. The Grand Parade for the present is assigned on the field in the rear of the College.

When on the twenty-fourth the Continental troops were brigaded Washington remembered who raised the new Maryland Line and

⁸Archives, Nat. Guerre. Carton Rochambeau.

ordered "Third & Fourth Maryland regiments—a Brigade to be commanded by Brigadier General Gist."

The journal continues:

"Upon my arrival in Camp [on his return from his visit to the French fleet] I found that the 3rd Maryland Reg. had got in (under the Command of Colo. Adams) and that all except a few missing vessels with the Troops from the Head of Elk were arrived."

In the meantime, the troops that had been brought up from the West Indies by de Grasse had been landed at Lynn Haven Bay and rowed up the James River in longboats by the French sailors. Some were landed on Jamestown island, others at Burwell's ferry. Stores and the lighter artillery were landed as expeditiously as possible. There was considerable delay, however, with the heavy siege guns that Barras, who had slipped in with his ships from Newport while the naval battle off the capes was in progress, had brought with him. But with this important exception, on September 26 all the troops were concentrated in and around Williamsburg, and they included the army of Rochambeau from Rhode Island, 4,000 men; the Continentals under Washington, 3,800; the French contingent from Martinique under the Marquis de Saint-Simon, 3,200; the expeditionary force under Lafayette, 2,500 veterans of the Virginia campaign; and an uncertain, but daily increasing, number of Virginia militia under General Weedon.

Washington's account of his first meeting with the French admiral is not replete with those details which would make such fascinating reading today. However, it is very much to the point. In his journal he wrote: "In company with Count de Rochambeau, the Chevalier de Chastellux, Gen. Knox, and Gen. Duportail, I set out for an interview with the Ad. and arrived on board the *Ville de Paris* (off Cape Henry) next day about noon, and having settled most points with him to my Satisfaction, except not obtaining assurance of sending Ships above York, I embarked on board the *Queen Charlotte*, the vessel I went down in—but by reason of hard blowing and contrary winds, I did not reach Williamsburg till the 22nd."

It is only fair to state the reasons why, in the judgment of the French admiral, it was unwise to accede to Washington's request, although his failure to do so was the cause of much anxiety to the

Allied land forces throughout the siege. De Grasse held that light ships, such as he might spare, would not serve the purpose of making it impossible for Cornwallis to escape up the river, while in view of the fact that heavy British ships were hourly expected to arrive from New York, it would be unwise of him to allow himself to be separated from any of his fighting ships that he might be in desperate need of at any moment. On the day after his return to the Army (September 23), however, Washington sent the following dispatch to the President of Congress announcing that all was well:

"I am happy to inform Congress that I found the French Admiral disposed in the best manner to give us all the assistance in his power and perfectly to co-operate with me in our present attempt." With success in sight he wrote:

"28th; Having debarked all the Troops and their baggage, marched and Encamped them in front of the City [Williamsburg], and having with some difficulty obtained horses and Wagons sufficient to move our field artillery, Intrenching tools, and such other articles as were indispensably necessary, we commenced our March for the Investiture of the Enemy at York."

While Commissary General Blanchard was pushed into the background by the arrival of so many distinguished officers, his urgent duties continued to oppress him.

"I set to work," he wrote, "although without a piece of paper, or an employe or a bag of flour at my disposal. I was completely overwhelmed. I caused ovens to be constructed, but I was in want of tools and had to run about much and negotiate to obtain even a hammer." Then the outlook grew brighter, and Blanchard recorded enthusiastically, "Our generals came and deposited with me 800,000 livres in piastres which M. de Grasse had brought for us."

And now a new and most unusual problem arose: where to store the "hard" money. M. Blanchard, not appreciating how little used Virginia flooring was to bearing the weight of gold and silver, stored it in a room on the ground floor of his quarters under which there was a cellar. "In the course of the night," he reported, "the floor being weak broke under the weight of the coin and both the treasure and the sentinel guarding it were precipitated into the cellar, without, however, any loss of the first or injury to the latter."

VIII

Before Yorktown

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to understand the Virginia campaign, which paved the way to the crowning victory of the war, without dwelling in some detail upon the operations which preceded it in this region, although, largely as a result of faulty co-operation between the Allies, these preliminary operations ended in failure.

The days that Washington and Rochambeau had spent together in Newport were not wholly devoted to festivities. Indeed, here a definite plan was arranged, at the pressing request of the legislature of Virginia, to relieve a situation in that state which had become a menace to the patriot cause. The day before he left Newport, Washington had the great joy of seeing the French contingent that was to "succor" his mother state sail out of the harbor bound for the Chesapeake on board the squadron of M. Destouches; though of course the objective of the expedition was a military secret, closely held.

For many months Clinton in New York had been obsessed with the idea that, now having complete control of the sea, he could end the rebellion by driving a wedge between the Northern and the Southern colonies—members of what he regarded, with some reason, as a loose and not entirely harmonious confederacy. With this purpose in view he sent two expeditions to the Chesapeake—one under Arnold, which anchored off Jamestown island on January 2, 1781, and a few days later, after ravaging the James River country, entered and plundered Richmond. Arnold then withdrew to Portsmouth, near deep water, and, having taken up a strongly fortified

position there, sent out through the tidewater country, and beyond, the marauding detachments which von Steuben, with the uncertain support of the local militia, was unable to cope with.

It was to relieve this distressing situation that Destouches was ordered to the Chesapeake, and to assist him Washington detached twelve hundred men of his best troops, the carefully selected light infantry. They marched to the Chesapeake, and at Annapolis awaited the coming of the transports or other shipping, by means of which, it had been arranged, Destouches would bring them down the bay to the scene of the prospective land operations. Unfortunately the French squadron met with the stormy weather usual off the Atlantic coast in March, and was widely scattered. Fortunately, however, eight ships had been got together when Destouches was confronted by the British squadron under Admiral Graves off the capes.

The French were not outnumbered, there would seem to have been eight ships on each side, but Destouches had with him no vessel so powerful as the *London*, the British flagship, which was a three-decker. The meeting and the resulting conflict were long and sanguinary, and both sides seem to have suffered equal damage, but in the end Graves maintained his position of control at the entrance to the Chesapeake waters and Destouches was compelled to return to Newport, towing the *Conquerant*, which had lost its rudder and was in imminent danger of sinking. It should not be overlooked that in this forgotten battle on the sea the French squadron lost twice as many men as did the Allied armies at Yorktown eight months later.

This decided check blocked the plan that had been devised to save Virginia, and Lafayette was ordered to return to the Hudson. These orders were countermanded, however, when Washington learned that Clinton had decided to reinforce his troops in the Chesapeake region with a brigade under General Phillips, who was justly regarded as his most able lieutenant. As soon as he could, and with what force he could muster, Lafayette now marched South, and in April he was in Richmond confronting Phillips, though with a decidedly inferior force. From then on Virginia became the probable scene of major operations.

In all Washington had hoped and planned to do to help his native state and Lafayette, he was hampered by the failure of Wayne to

put the Potomac behind him. As early as February 1781 Wayne had been ordered South with about a thousand men of the Pennsylvania Line, reorganized after the mutiny in January. But some embers of the old discontent smoldered on, and they were fanned into a flame by want of supplies and unsatisfied pay rolls. When York (Pennsylvania) was reached, something very like another mutiny took place. It seems to have been provoked by an attempt that was made there to pay the men off in Congress money, without any account being taken of its depreciation. Seven of the leaders were brought before a drumhead court-martial and, being found guilty, were immediately lined up and shot or hanged, according to their degree of guilt. But with all his energy Wayne did not join Lafayette until June 10.¹ It had taken him five months to drag disaffected soldiers along the short distance of three hundred miles.

Encouraged by this welcome addition to his slender force, Lafayette now began to dog the footsteps of Cornwallis and to harass his uncertain movements whenever he could.

It was toward the end of this desultory campaign, with all its marching and countermarching up and down the tidewater counties of Virginia, that Lafayette had his narrow escape from disaster, at Green Spring, the famous seat of Governor Berkeley, on the north bank of the James River. Lafayette had received information that Cornwallis was crossing to the south side of the James, indeed, that the bulk of his men were already over, and that only a small detachment was left on the north bank, awaiting an opportunity to cross. He immediately sent General Wayne ahead with the newly arrived Pennsylvania Line and a battalion of light infantry to "drive" this detachment, if possible, to capture it.

Wayne went gaily ahead, not unnaturally, giving full credit and belief to the information with which Lafayette had furnished him. After crossing a swamp back of the riverbank, instead of the small guard defending the landing, he came face to face with the whole of Cornwallis' force. It was a situation of great danger and it was probably saved, as it only could have been saved, by one of Mad Anthony's inspirations, which were so frequently described as foolhardy. He hoped that the enemy were as ignorant of the strength of his force as he had been of theirs, and, realizing that his safety de-

¹From *Wayne Papers*. Philadelphia Casket, 1829.

pended upon a daring advance, he made it without hesitation. This boldness gave the guardsmen with Cornwallis the idea that Wayne was supported by the bulk of Lafayette's army, and they yielded ground, not only because Wayne's advance was impetuous, but because they thought that by extending their flanks they would later be able to envelop, and perhaps capture, the whole attacking force.

In the confusion and delay which this movement afforded, however, Wayne disengaged his men, made good his retreat around the swamp, and was soon again in close touch with Lafayette. Although acting under most misleading information, and although his small force had been undoubtedly taken by surprise, the losses which Wayne inflicted upon the British were quite as heavy as those he himself suffered. Not the least remarkable feature of this engagement was the fact that the men of the Pennsylvania Line, who behaved with such gallantry and steadiness throughout the engagement, were the very men who had been in open mutiny a few weeks before. As is so often the case, it was only active service in the face of the enemy that had been needed to develop their sterling qualities.

General Greene, on hearing of this engagement, wrote to Wayne words of praise and of caution too. "The Marquis gives you glory for your late conduct in the action at Jamestown," he said. "It gives me great pleasure to hear of the success of my friend, but be a little careful and tread softly, for depend upon it, you have a modern Hannibal to deal with in the person of Cornwallis."

Cornwallis then proceeded to Portsmouth on the Elizabeth River, and, for reasons which Clinton never approved, transferred his force to Yorktown, and the decisive campaign opened.

The unexpected and the unforeseen are always happening in war. The troops had arrived from the North and the fleet was riding near by at anchor. The Allied army and the French Navy had got together and were in agreement, or nearly so, as to how the operations should be carried on. Then came news of the most unsettling description. Some of it was obviously sensational, other rumors might be well founded. The most disquieting report of all was one to the effect that Admiral Digby had arrived in New York to join Admiral Graves, and even if he came with only eight vessels, as the not-very-reliable *Royalist Gazette* in New York announced, that changed the

situation materially. At all events it provoked the following disturbing letter from de Grasse to Rochambeau (September 24):

"The arrival of Digby must change our plans. As soon as weather permits I will get under way and take up my position across the entrance of the Bay to bar out the enemy. I leave with you the troops of M. de Saint-Simon until I return. If I am compelled by the weather, or by the result of the battle, not to return, please send the regiments back to Martinique on the vessels which remain in the river."²

Here indeed was a complication, a most unwelcome one. Digby's fleet hung over the situation like the sword of Damocles. Any day he might appear. Most fortunately he did not join the fleet in New York with his squadron until it was too late. Yet, any moment he might come, and any moment de Grasse might again be compelled to slip cables and sally out to meet the united British squadrons in a battle of which no one would dare to predict the result. No wonder the preparations for the siege were prosecuted with feverish activity. Any hour the favorable aspect of affairs might undergo a change. Any day the vital factor of the French fleet, upon which so many hopes were based, might disappear from the scene.

The course of naval operations off the American coast at this period is absolutely incomprehensible, unless it is borne in mind that at all, or nearly all, the seasons of the year weather conditions were of paramount importance. It was old Boreas who really ruled the waves, and the line-of-battle ships and the frigates of those days had to submit with such grace as was possible to this servitude. All the sea operations were controlled by the fact that from June to October, and sometimes later, are the hurricane months in the West Indies, while from October to June was set down as the stormy winter season off the Atlantic coast. These weather limitations left little time for operations at sea, and indeed very close calculations had to be made to undertake any operations.

Despite these uncertainties and anxieties, early on the morning of September 28 the Allied army swept out of Williamsburg on the last lap of the long march to victory. With the Continentals in advance, they marched down the "great road" of the peninsula toward York,

²Rochambeau Papers.

where, as his first dispatches to Clinton in New York reveal, Cornwallis was awaiting them in complete ignorance of the things that were to come. He was blockaded, it was true, by a strong French fleet, but he was quite confident that soon the British squadrons would unite and drive the French from their point of vantage between the Virginia Capes.

The British "Hannibal" was now facing a soldier as bold and as confident as himself, and, as events were soon to show, with better reason. As the eager troops went by him in light marching order Washington issued to them his fighting injunction. It read:

"If the enemy should be tempted to meet the army on the march, the General particularly enjoins the Troops to place their principal reliance on the bayonet, that they may prove the vanity of the boast which the British make of their peculiar prowess in deciding battles with that weapon. He trusts that a generous emulation will actuate the Allied armies; that the French, whose national weapon is that of close fight, and the troops in general, that have so often used it with success, will distinguish themselves on every occasion that offers. The justice of the cause in which we are engaged, and the honor of the two nations, must inspire every breast with sentiments that are the presage of victory."

At the Halfway House the columns separated. The Americans filing off to the right were halted at noon within two miles of the enemy position in front of Yorktown. The American advance was held by the light infantry under General Muhlenberg, preceded by Moylan's dragoons, while the French column was led by the volunteers under Baron Saint-Simon,⁸ and the grenadier and chasseur companies of most of the French infantry regiments. The British covering troops were withdrawn from many of their advanced positions, without offering even a nominal resistance, and before sunset the Allied army was formed in line of battle, extending from the York River above the town to the Beaverdam on Warwick Creek. The French held the left, and the Americans on the right extended their line without molestation to within a few hundred yards of the British positions. The day had passed very differently from what had been expected. It was strange, indeed disconcerting, that Corn-

⁸The founder of the Saint-Simon School of which in later years the world was to hear much.

wallis should allow himself to be cooped up without even a show of resistance. Perhaps he knew that the fleet and the relieving troops were near at hand. In any event, Washington took no chances, and his order when darkness fell was "The whole army, officers and soldiers, will lay on their arms this night."

Every possible effort had been made to feed the troops well and to maintain the army assembled in front of Yorktown in a good state of health, but luxuries were evidently lacking. The commissaries and other supply officers—and they would seem to have outnumbered the supplies—were enjoined to furnish "straw, good bread, and one gill of rum per man daily." There was another menace to the health of his troops, and in his General Orders of September 29 Washington issued the following warning:

"Our ungenerous enemy, having, as usual, propagated the small-pox in this part of the country, the Commander in Chief forbids the officers and soldiers of the Army having any communication with the houses or inhabitants in the neighborhood, or borrowing any utensils from them."

In the issue of December 1781, from the pen of an officer present at the siege with the French contingent, the *Mercure de France* reports still more "ungenerous" conduct. His account reads: "To stop the advance on York, Lord Cornwallis, instead of attacking our column as a soldier would have done, had recourse to ruses such as only savage Indians are capable of employing. He had thrown into the wells heads of steers, dead horses, and even the bodies of dead negroes. The result was the French Army was short of water; it could have been molested in a more worthy manner.

"Indeed, it was with these same unworthy weapons that before this he sought to destroy the little army of La Fayette. He inoculated all the negroes who had deserted their plantations or whom he could induce to run away, and then forced them, by threatening their lives, to return to our camps and so carry the contagion into our midst. It was only the vigilance of La Fayette that frustrated these diabolical schemes." It is to be hoped that this officer was mistaken and that nothing like this was attempted or even planned.

We must now, as did the men with Washington and Rochambeau, make the acquaintance of the three regiments forming the division under the Marquis de Saint-Simon, which de Grasse brought up

with him from the West Indies and landed so opportunely on the James River. They were excellent troops, though somewhat depleted both as to number and as to stamina by long residence in the tropics. They were the regiments of Touraine, of Agenais, and the Gatinais, under the command respectively of the Vicomte de Pondeux, the Marquis d'Audechamps, and the Marquis de Rostaing. Eight hundred marines, placed under the command of M. de Choisy, famous for his part in the siege of faraway Cracow, were also landed on September 30, and assisted Lauzun and his legion in holding the British at Gloucester on the several occasions when it would appear they attempted to break through. Lieutenant Colonel d'Aboville, who commanded the French artillery, by his intelligent activity laid the foundations here of the greater fame he was later to acquire in the wars of the Republic and in the Napoleonic campaigns.

Of these organizations that came with Saint-Simon, the Gatinais, at least, was no stranger to America. It had been with d'Estaing throughout his operations, and had protected the withdrawal of the French forces from in front of Savannah. This regiment, with that of Deux-Ponts, had the best opportunities for distinguished service during the siege, and the opportunities were availed of. This was Rochambeau's old regiment, the one in which he had served during the campaigns in Germany. It was to these men he had said on the evening of the assault: "This night I have need of you," promising at the same time to have their old name of *Auvergne sans Tâche* restored to them by the King's favor—a promise which the King helped him to make good at their first meeting.

The second was the regiment of Touraine, formed as far back as 1636. It had distinguished itself first at the famous siege of La Rochelle, and it was at the head of this regiment, in the battle of Minden, that Lafayette's father had fallen.

Third was the regiment of Agenais, under the command of M. d'Audechamps. It was the ranking regiment of the division and numbered a thousand men.

In his narrative, still in manuscript,⁴ the Chevalier d'Aucteville, who came up from the West Indies with the French division under the Marquis de Saint-Simon, gives the following graphic description of the American troops he and his men joined up with on the James

⁴*Campagne de la Chesapeake*, MS. Archives Nat. Marine, B4 184-144.

River, before the arrival of the French contingent coming from the Hudson under Rochambeau, or the Continentals under Washington, also coming from the North.

"The army of the Republic was composed of four distinct groups. First, the six regiments of the American regular army (the Continental or line regiments), who are well disciplined and experienced soldiers, capable of fighting in line formation. They numbered 1,600 men. Second, there were 160 dragoons well mounted and riding well, all men perfectly at home in the saddle. Third, there were 2,500 militia, recruited from the countryside, and fourth, about 500 mountaineers, all excellent men with the rifle.

"These last two groups are not in uniform. They wear loose breeches and some have shoes, but a great many are without them. The last-mentioned mountaineers in particular form an excellent corps of sharpshooters, very competent to skirmish in the brush but not at all to fight in line formation. Very few of these troops have tents and almost all of them camp under temporary shelters made of branches covered with dried foliage or bark. They are all sober and patient and subsist entirely upon corn meal. They meet privations and delays without murmuring and are capable of sustaining great fatigue and long marches, and these, of course, are admirable and most desirable qualities for an organization of real light infantry. They are all soldierly looking, and, for the most part, big men."⁸

Cornwallis was now in a position which he most certainly never would have taken up had he enjoyed anything like liberty of choice. Yorktown might have answered the purpose of a joint naval station and army base had the British fleet continued to control the seas. The menace of the French vessels now blockading the York River, in more or less plain view, and the heavier but less distinct line of French frigates stretching out between the capes, demonstrated only too clearly that for the moment, the immensely important and vital moment, the British no longer dominated the Atlantic coast.

"Nothing but the hope of relief would have induced me to attempt its defense," Cornwallis maintained in after years, and certainly his later judgment at least was correct. But he made every effort to make the best of a bad position, indeed, of a hopeless one, unless the British fleet broke through and released him from the

⁸*Campagne de la Chesapeake*, MS. Archives Nat. Marine, B4 184-144.

strangle hold exercised by the land army of the Allies and the blockading fleet.

The little town, soon to become famous as the place where the cornerstone of American liberty was firmly laid, stood directly on the banks of the river and only about thirty feet above the water line. From the river it could be defended with a chance of success, but on the land side there were no commanding features that might prove helpful against attack. Across the river, which was about a mile wide, nestled the little village of Gloucester, which for some reason Cornwallis had been at pains to fortify, even before the advance of the Allied forces betrayed their purpose. He would seem to have regarded it as the bridgehead permitting a retreat to the North for the purpose of joining Clinton, and this was undoubtedly one of the plans he had under consideration.

The defenses of Gloucester consisted of a single line of shallow entrenchments, strengthened by four redoubts and three batteries, mounting in all not more than twenty guns—none greater than eighteen-pounders. Hastily now, as the plans of the investing army developed, Cornwallis sought to surround his main position at York with a line of entrenchments; this, however, was far from completed when the investment took place. On this account, and in the hope of gaining a breathing spell before the serious business began, Cornwallis took up what he described "as a strong position out of the town," which he proposed to hold while such defenses of the inner line as he could improvise were being completed. He availed himself of a ravine, extending from the river to within about half a mile of Wormley's Creek, and this left only about half a mile, between these natural obstructions, to be defended by works of art.

He set to work feverishly to fortify the open space between the ravine and the creek, which was to become the battleground, into which the road from Hampton and the sea and the road from Williamsburg and the James debouched. It was a narrow front, and for a time Cornwallis was confident he could hold it until relief and reinforcements should reach him. His greatest miscalculation was as to the caliber of the siege guns that could be brought to bear upon his position. These had been dragged with the greatest difficulty over land all the way from West Point, or brought with almost equal difficulty by Barras on his ships. Though Mr. Woodward, a recent

historian of Washington, disapproves of this step, saying it was quite unnecessary, in a few days the bombardment satisfied Cornwallis, who, after all, was an able soldier, that on account of these heavy guns he could not long maintain himself. Panicky messages to Clinton in New York were sent out in "pinnaces and rowing galleys," under cover of darkness, through the line of the French ships.

Before the unpleasant surprise of the siege guns developed the British engineers were hopeful, and designed three redoubts to consolidate their position. One was placed on each side of the road to Williamsburg, and a third, somewhat to the left, commanded the way to Hampton Roads and deep water. This last redoubt, which projected beyond the line, was called, from its formation, the Horn-work. At commanding points along the entrenched line, about sixty guns were mounted. Cornwallis had not hampered his march North with much artillery, and most of these guns had been obtained by stripping the frigate *Charon* of her armament. At the point where the ravine entered the river, the frigate *Guadeloupe* was moored, and her guns protected this flank with some success, and caused much annoyance to the besiegers.

Great, however, was the joy in the Allied ranks when, on the morning of September 30, it was discovered that in the course of the night the enemy had quietly abandoned the entrenched camp and exterior positions at Pigeon quarter (as it was called locally), and retired with their guns into the inner defenses of York. This move was generally regarded as a great mistake on the part of Cornwallis, and even Rochambeau expressed in his memoirs the surprise which this withdrawal caused him. He added that it was of the greatest assistance to the besieging forces. Later, when the high officers involved began the controversy which lasted so many years, both Clinton and Tarleton criticized the move severely.

But Cornwallis may not have acted so unwisely. In any event, he was in possession of reassuring news of which Rochambeau at the time could not have been informed. The day before his withdrawal to the inner line he had received a letter from Clinton, announcing that the relieving fleet, with a land force of five thousand men, would in all probability sail from New York on October 5. According to Cornwallis' calculations, it should arrive in Virginia waters in two weeks at the outside. He felt confident of holding out that

long and he so advised Clinton; he withdrew into the inner lines because his force was small and there was much sickness in the ranks. He had even then a long line to hold, and he knew that in no circumstances could he hold it indefinitely. He realized that as long as he maintained himself in the advanced position, all the lines would have to be defended with very slender forces.

Of course the appearance of the siege guns, which the fleet of M. de Barras brought from Newport, had injected a new and wholly unexpected factor into the situation. But they were not dragged up to the front until October 6, about a week after Cornwallis had made his fateful decision. With the information that he had, it is probable Cornwallis acted prudently in shortening his line and consolidating his position. In any event, he was doomed, and he knew it, unless the British fleet regained control of the entrance to the Chesapeake.

All the diarists are in agreement as to how the siege began. Tench Tilghman^a wrote: "The sixth at night the trenches were opened between five and six hundred yards from the enemy's works, and the first parallel run—Commencing about the Center of the enemy's works opposite the Secretary's House (Nelson's) and running on the right to the York River; the parallel is supported by 4 redoubts. These approaches are directed against the 4 works on the enemy's left. They kept up a pretty brisk fire during the night, but, as our working parties were not discovered by them, their shot was in the wrong direction."⁷

On the next day Fersen, who had become the principal aide to Rochambeau, made the following entry as to what happened on the French front:

"At eight o'clock this evening we opened a trench at three hundred fathoms from the works. The ground, which is very much cut up by little ravines, greatly facilitated our approach and enabled us to reach our trenches under cover without being obliged to dig a tunnel."

Chaplain Evans added: "The night was the most favorable in the world. Providence seemed evidently to have drawn the curtains of darkness around us on purpose to conceal us from our enemy

^aMilitary secretary to Washington.

⁷Maryland Historical Society MS.

until the time of our greatest danger had passed. Not a man killed or wounded in the American camp, and but a few in the camp of the French."

The journal of M. de Menonville, of the French Engineers (a distinguished officer who later in the Napoleonic Wars rose to the rank of major general), who designed and directed the construction of the trenches, disclosed phases of the operations in front of Yorktown which the other chroniclers either ignore or dismiss with but scant notice. His diary and reports reveal the undoubted fact that the siege was not all beer and skittles and that victory did not come flashing in a blaze of glory. In his account there is little open warfare and no mention of magnificent charges. So that the men he commanded who burrowed underground and fought with pick and shovel may not be entirely forgotten, I shall quote a few passages from his journal:^a

"October 6 to 7. One thousand night workmen; the trench was opened by a parallel—this parallel was supported by 4 redoubts, 2 on the American and 2 on the French ground. The advanced work of the Americans, which properly speaking is one with our own, rests on the River. Their work of this night has been the construction of that part of the parallel which belongs to them—at daybreak the works for the grand attack were nearly ready to receive the troops. The day was spent in perfecting the parallel with 400 workmen from the trench battalion.

"October 7 to 8. This night under the direction of engineers, 500 workmen were employed in beginning the communication to the rear and, on the right of the parallel, in perfecting the redoubt as well—at the advanced work of the Americans, the construction of the batteries was also begun. [After every night of digging Menonville gives the list of casualties among the laborers. It is like a ledger—so many feet dug, so many men lost.]

"October 9 to 10. 400 workmen were employed during the night in palisading the redoubts of the parallel and perfecting its communications, and 300 working with the artillery in continuing the Batteries." Then without date he writes: "750 night workmen were employed in beginning a second parallel about 140 yards in advance

^aThese translated excerpts are to be found in *Magazine of American History*, Vol. 7, p. 283.

of first. The American workmen constructed their part of the parallel to the right where it extends to a point opposite their battery of five guns." And briefly:

"October 12 to 13. Night workmen 600. October Fourteen to fifteen the night of the joint attack. Night workmen 800."

Cornwallis Is Taken

ON THE Gloucester side of the river the siege was filled with stirring episodes. Rochambeau had learned to appreciate Lauzun, but he was still a little afraid of his reckless gallantry, and was happier in mind when he succeeded, without ruffling the *Beau Sabreur's* feelings, in placing M. de Choisy, who is always referred to as the "hero of the siege of Cracow," in command of that front. This force on the north side of the river had been greatly increased after the siege began. With considerable difficulty M. de Grasse, who was in daily expectation of having to meet the reinforced and united squadrons of the British fleet, had been cajoled into giving the army eight hundred marine soldiers from the "garrisons" of his ships; and yeomen service they did in supporting the legion and the Virginia militia. "You can have them," said de Grasse, "but remember, not another man will I give up."

With this reinforcement the Allies formed an encircling line that, after one or two feints, Colonel Tarleton did not attempt to break through. It was on the first of October that the new commander and the marines arrived. Their coming rather took the British by surprise. Up to this time they had indulged freely in foraging expeditions, which were always practiced by Tarleton, who believed in living on the enemy's country. The last "great forage," which the new arrivals interrupted, came very near ending in a personal encounter between Tarleton and Lauzun, both famous swordsmen. They met in a forest, and as the British troopers were loaded down

with the booty of Indian corn they had collected, they were at some disadvantage.

As Lauzun made for his antagonist, who was also his especial enemy, Tarleton's horse was bowled over by another horse that had been speared by one of the charging hussars. In the melee Tarleton was picked up and carried off by his men. Cavalry reinforcements came, but they also were being driven back until the arrival of an infantry battalion put a stop to the skirmish. "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, who had come up from the Southern army with dispatches and remained at Yorktown for the siege in the unaccustomed role of "observer," describes this affair very vividly in his memoirs, and gives equal praise to Lauzun and to young John Mercer, who had now returned to the Army at the head of a company of Virginia militia. Fortunately these men, although enrolled in the militia, were nearly all veterans of line regiments who had served their time and now returned to the colors to defend their homes.

Encouraged by the outcome of this skirmish, Choisy moved in closer and drew his lines tighter. He placed his advanced posts within a mile of Gloucester, and in these limits the British were held until the end came. What the plans of Cornwallis were, when later he attempted to transfer his whole force to the north side of the river, have never been disclosed. He doubtless intended to act intelligently as the situation developed, and was committed to no definite plan.

In the critical stage of the main siege which had now arrived, Count William de Deux-Ponts not only played a distinguished role, but added to our obligation by writing a very clear and interesting narrative of what he did and what he saw.¹ From the beginning the zealous young officer had been of the opinion that the works on the right of the English line were their strongest position and that sooner or later they would have to be captured; he gave many hints of his belief that he and his men should be employed in this dangerous enterprise.

On the evening of October 11 the second parallel was started to be ready for the "vigorous sortie" from the town which was to be expected. The Chevalier de Chastellux, general officer of the trenches that day, made "such a disposition of the troops as would

¹*My Campaigns in America*, p. 137.

enable him to receive the enemy in the most advantageous manner." The besieged suspected that something important was in preparation and fired "many cannon, bombs, and howitzers," but "with little effect," and Deux-Ponts reports that at daybreak "our men are sufficiently covered to be safe from running any more great risks."

The details of this gallant work, the starting of the second parallel, are curiously enough almost entirely lacking. On the American front the Maryland and the Pennsylvania Line were engaged upon it, and on the French front the Gatinais and the Royal Deux-Ponts regiments. Von Steuben, who was more experienced in sieges than any general officer present, informed Washington in his official report that the men of these line regiments performed their duty "with a degree of bravery and dispatch that exceeded his most sanguine expectations," and concluded by saying that he considered this feat, of initiating the work on the second parallel, "as the most important part of the siege." According to one survivor of the daring feat, "the parallel was carried on with amazing rapidity at 360 yards' distance from the enemies' batteries under a very heavy fire, shot and shell going over our heads in a continual blaze the whole night."²

On the thirteenth a careful reconnaissance of the intervening ground was made, and the engineers reached the conclusion that the advanced or "protruding" redoubts of the enemy completely blocked the continuation of the second parallel, which, of necessity, they held, and must be continued to the York River. Deux-Ponts felt that an assault on these redoubts would be ordered almost immediately, and he was delighted at the prospect, especially as on the morning of the fourteenth his regiment and the Gatinais battalion commenced their tour of trench duty.³

As ordered by General Viomesnil, Deux-Ponts reported at the front with these detachments and watched with interest as the general separated the grenadiers and the chasseurs from the other companies. He was overjoyed as he received the command of the battalion of "shock troops" so formed. And now, as far as possible, I will give the young officer's straightforward story in his own words:

"The General told me that in this way he wished to give me a

²Martin's Gazetteer.

³*My Campaigns in America*, p. 137.

proof of his esteem and confidence. These words concealed no enigma for me, and a few minutes later he revealed his plan by telling me to place the battalion under cover and that in the course of the night he had decided I should lead an attack on one of the redoubts which was blocking our new parallel. A few hours later Deux-Ponts, together with the Baron de Lestrade, lieutenant colonel of the Gatinais regiment given me as second in command, and two sergeants selected from the picked grenadiers and chasseurs, men who were as brave as they were intelligent, carefully explored in the greatest detail the hazardous path they were to follow in the darkness of the night. The General explained his plan and what he expected of us most clearly."

Here Deux-Ponts interpolated very modestly: "In any event, owing to his great experience and his perfect familiarity with what should be done in the circumstances, M. de l'Estrade would have prevented me from making the mistakes which unaided I might have fallen into."

After leading his men into that section of the trench nearest the redoubt, and halting them at the point from which the charge was to be made, Deux-Ponts assembled the captains of the battalion and addressed them.

There was indeed no need to spur them on—to animate their courage—but I thought I should inform them of the duty with which the General had honored us and also that I should give them all the details I could as to how our advance upon the enemy should be made. We then set out and passed further along the trench, in and out among the soldiers who held it and the laborers who were working on the parallel. Everyone wished me success and much glory and were loud in their regrets that they could not all go along with me. And my brother (Count Christian, the colonel of the family regiment), yes, my brother, in this moment exhibited for me a deep affection which went to my heart, which I shall never forget.

When we arrived at the place which General Viomesnil had selected as our point of departure, I halted the men and there awaited the coming of the night. When we were enveloped in the darkness that soon closed in, the General ordered me out of the trench and instructed me to form my men into a column for the attack; and now we only had to await the arranged signal—six bombs fired in quick succession from one of our batteries.

The chasseurs of the Gatinais regiment were at the head of my column. The first fifty men carried fascines, and among the others there were eight who carried ladders. Then came in files the Gatinais grenadiers, and after them the grenadiers and the chasseurs of the Royal Deux-Ponts in columns of sections. The column was preceded by the two sergeants⁴ and by eight pioneers with axes, and one hundred paces behind them were drawn up the chasseurs of the Bourbonnais and the Agenais regiments to give me support, if needed. Behind them was the second battalion of the Agenais regiment under the Count de Rostaing, which completed my reserve.

On our right were the Americans under the Marquis de la Fayette. They were awaiting the same signal that we were, and when given they were to advance against the other redoubt, which, resting on the York River, was of equal importance and also a great obstacle to the continuation of our parallel. When the bombs were fired, I gave the order to advance in the greatest silence, and we had probably gone a hundred or 130 paces when our column was discovered. A Hessian soldier, the sentinel on their parapet, cried out "*Wer da?*" We did not answer, but pressed on now at the double quick, and immediately the enemy opened fire. We kept right on, but were stopped at the abatis, which was most strongly built and undamaged. It stood twenty-five paces in front of the redoubt. It held us up for several minutes and here we lost some men. But as soon as we could we went over it with resolution and then dived down into the ditch, every man trying *à se faire jour au travers des fraises*⁵ [to make his way through the fortifications], and then to mount up on the parapet. The pioneers were working vigorously with their axes to breach the palisades, and at first we were very few who reached the parapet, and I now ordered these men to fire. But when the palisade was breached in several places, a greater number of our men arrived and soon the parapet was crowded with them.

The men of the redoubt had by this time taken refuge behind a line of great casks; here they were crowded closely together and consequently our fire upon them was most effective. I was about to give

⁴Balch says in *Les Français en Amérique* that the names of these gallant fellows were Le Cornet and Foret.

⁵*Fraising* or *fraises*, for both terms were used, are out of date, having been superseded by wire. At this period they were wooden palisades placed so as to project horizontally from the escarp of the trench or redoubt, or sloping downward into the bottom of the ditch, to delay and harass the assaulting party. In view of the haste with which they had been erected it is clear that the fortifications of Yorktown were simply field defenses.

the order, telling my men to drop down into the trench and give them the bayonet, when the enemy threw down their arms and we were consequently able to jump down upon them at our ease and without risk. I raised the cry, "Long live the King!" in which all the grenadiers and chasseurs who were unhurt joined. But the enemy replied with a salvo of artillery and heavy musketry fire. I confess I have never witnessed a more beautiful or a more majestic spectacle, but I could not stop to admire it for long. I had to look after my wounded, and after the prisoners, and then Baron Viomesnil appeared and ordered me to consolidate my position and to prepare for an attack which he thought would not be long delayed. Our General was judging the English commander after his own pattern. That is what he would have done immediately, but the English did not advance.

Despite the heavy fire, in a few moments I had brought everything in order when one of my sentinels called out, saying he saw troops approaching from the English lines. I peered over the parapet and at that moment a bullet ricocheted in the parapet and, passing very close to my head, covered my face with a shower of gravel and sand. I was immediately in great pain and compelled to allow myself to be carried to the dressing station.

In his advance, Deux-Ponts reports that he lost about a hundred officers and men, killed and wounded. The greater number of these fell in front of the abatis or in climbing over it. He dwells particularly on the bravery of the young officers who came with him as volunteers. He distinguishes the Chevalier de Lameth, who received serious and crippling wounds, and the Count de Vauban, who had come from headquarters to report to Rochambeau the details of this feat of arms. There was also the Count Charles de Damas, whom we have met before and of whom we shall hear again in the course of this narrative. "I tried to turn them back, [wrote Deux-Ponts], but they would not pay heed to the protest which I made which would have withdrawn them from the field of glory and of honor. In the course of the night," he adds, "now that the salient redoubt had been captured, the second parallel was continued and joined to the redoubt which the Americans had captured, their attack having met with the same success as our own."

The Allied army, not having been composed exclusively of supermen, it would have been strange indeed had not the spirit of emulation which Washington sought to encourage developed a few flashes

of jealousy. The French would have preferred to manage both assaults with the American contingent coming on behind to "mop up," but this plan did not prosper. A French project was defeated by only a narrow margin. Major Gimat, who had served with the American light infantry for two years, a most capable and experienced French officer, was proposed to command the American assaulting column. As he knew it was an excellent selection Washington was about to give his approval, but Hamilton was on fire in a moment, and penned a strong letter of protest. Washington gave him the command, a perilous one indeed, not far removed from a forlorn hope.

The command was Hamilton's by right, as he was the field officer of the day (October 14), but Gimat's battalion of light infantry was maintained in the post of honor and of danger because it had served longest in Virginia. Gimat went along with his men, but, as he was wounded by the first fire and sent to the rear, there were no clashes between the two high-spirited young officers.

Hamilton's account of the American attack on Redoubt No. 10, as it is generally called, is a model of what such a report should be. It might be studied today at West Point and elsewhere with advantage. But it is difficult to come by, the recent editions of Hamilton's works excluding all but the political writings. It is, however, included in an early edition,⁶ published in the last century, and from it I shall quote the essential paragraphs. It is addressed to General Lafayette, in command of the advanced American sector, and reads:

"Agreeably to your orders, we advanced in two columns with unloaded guns. The right composed of Lt. Col. Gimat's battalion and my own, commanded by Maj. Fish. The left [composed] of a detachment commanded by Lt. Col. Laurens, destined to take the enemy in reverse and intercept his retreat. The column on the right was preceded by a vanguard of twenty men led by Lt. Mansfield, and a detachment of sappers and miners, commanded by Capt. Gilliland, for the purpose of removing obstructions.

"The redoubt we attacked was commanded by Maj. Campbell with a detachment of British and German troops, and was completely in a state of defense. The rapidity and immediate success of

⁶*Hamilton's Works*. Edited by John C. Hamilton, Vol. I, p. 270. Apparently the edition did not prosper and only the first volume was published.

the assault are the best comments on the behavior of the troops. Lt. Col. Laurens distinguished himself by an exact and vigorous execution of his part of the plan, by entering the works with his corps among the foremost, and making prisoner the commanding officer of the redoubt."

Hamilton then gave praise to Gimat's battalion, "which formed the van of the right attack and advanced with an ardor and resolution superior to every obstacle." Praise also was given to Major Fish, "who advanced with such celerity as to arrive in time to participate in the assault."

Hamilton gave "peculiar applause" to Lieutenant Mansfield, who conducted the vanguard with "coolness, firmness, and punctuality"; likewise to Captain Olney, who led his platoon into the works with exemplary intrepidity and received two bayonet wounds. He did not forget Captain Gilliland, who with the sappers and miners "acquitted themselves in a manner that did them all great honor."

His summing up was: "I do but justice to the several corps when I have the pleasure to assure you there was not an officer nor a soldier whose behavior, if it could be particularized, would not have a claim to the warmest approbation. As it would have been attended with delay and loss to wait for the removal of the abatis and palisades, the ardor of the troops was indulged in going over them.

"There was a happy coincidence of movements everywhere. The enemy are entitled to the acknowledgement of an honorable defense. The killed and wounded of the enemy did not exceed eight. Incapable of imitating examples of barbarity and forgetting recent provocations [the murder of Colonel Scammel, after he had surrendered, is referred to], the soldiery spared every man who ceased to fight."

Then a word of praise for the French volunteers who would not be denied the pleasure of going with him. "Permit me to have the satisfaction of expressing our obligations to Colonel Armand and to Captain Legonge, the Chevalier de Tontevieux, and Captain Bedkin, officers of his corps who, acting upon this occasion as volunteers, proceeded at the head of the right column and, entering the redoubt among the first, by their gallant example contributed to the success of the enterprise."

The legion of Colonel Armand had suffered losses and even re-

verses in the course of the Virginia campaign. It had become reduced in numbers and somewhat disorganized, but these officers insisted upon taking part, as individuals, at least, in what they felt was to be the decisive struggle. In his letters to France of the period Armand said the Americans put through their attack with a rush and lost only nine killed and twenty wounded.

What happened while Deux-Ponts and Hamilton and their many gallant followers in the assault were enjoying their well-deserved laurels, Menonville made clear: "The moment we were masters of the redoubt 500 workmen debouched on the right of the second parallel to extend it up to this redoubt. The American workmen continued this parallel between the two redoubts. All these works were pushed with the greatest rapidity and were well advanced by daybreak."

Lafayette, in his memoirs, relating an incident that happened a few hours before the desperate assault, shed light on the spirit of generous rivalry between the Allied forces. Baron de Viomesnil, second in command to Rochambeau, in the most natural way in the world expressed in his presence great good will toward the Americans but little confidence in their training or ability for the work before them. Not a little piqued, Lafayette (who always insisted upon being regarded as an American officer) said: "We are young soldiers, it is true, but our tactics will be in this matter to fire our fusils and then go on—with the bayonet."

Lafayette was certainly quite right about the ardor of the American troops. They did not give the sappers and pioneers time to clear the way. Lafayette said that as they rushed forward they did not fire a shot. It is quite true that the redoubt the French attacked (No. 9) was more strongly held than that in front of the Americans, but the Americans were in full possession of their redoubt, and hustled their prisoners to the rear some minutes before the French troops entered theirs. Seeing this, Lafayette could not refrain from the retort—more or less courteous. He had not forgotten the remarks of Viomesnil the night before, and he sent his aide, Colonel Barber, to ask Deux-Ponts if he wanted any assistance. As a matter of fact, the French were in their trench seven minutes after they started, but they did meet with heavy losses, perhaps because they were formalists and, being trained soldiers, insisted upon sending

their axmen ahead to clear the way; thus they suffered casualties which the Americans escaped by leaping over "ditches, abatis, and palisades" in the informal manner already described.

At last perfect co-operation had been achieved, and the result was gratifying. Naturally, Washington commented upon this feature in the General Orders which he issued next day. They read:

"The General reflects with the highest pleasure on the confidence which the troops of the two nations must hereafter have in each other. Assured of mutual support, he is convinced that there is no danger which they will not cheerfully encounter—no difficulty which they will not bravely overcome."

The very moment the redoubts were taken the supporting troops came forward and fell to digging again, and by morning both of the recently captured redoubts were included in the second parallel. At daylight Cornwallis sent off a dispatch, in the hope that the bearer would reach New York, indicating that he realized fully what had happened.

"My situation becomes very critical," he wrote. "We dare not show a gun to their old batteries, and I expect their new ones will open on us tomorrow morning. The safety of the place is so precarious that I cannot recommend that the fleet and the army [from New York] should run any great risk in endeavoring to save us."

Cornwallis was determined to go down with colors flying, and the following night he sent over the top four hundred men under Colonel Abercromby, in the hope that they might be able to cripple the unfinished batteries whose fire he feared. The men moved out at three in the morning, and, after a sharp struggle, gained possession of the advanced French battery. They had time only to spike three guns when Chastellux came up with the French supports and drove them out with heavy losses. This gallant move was the last. In Cornwallis' opinion, there was only one chance left of escape, only one alternative to surrender, and that a slim one. However, on the night of the sixteenth Cornwallis in his desperation began to send his men over the river to Gloucester in the hope of breaking through the Allied lines there and pushing on northward to New York, if possible.

"Precarious it was," he wrote to Clinton, "but in our desperate situation I thought it deserved a trial." Clinton's comment was that

he could not see the "least daylight" in the move. But he was speaking after the event and with the knowledge of the failure that resulted.

A storm arose and scattered the boats. The dawn found the British wet and discouraged, back in their crumbling works. "We could not fire a single gun now," wrote Cornwallis, and so at ten o'clock on the morning of the seventeenth a little drummer boy in a red coat mounted the parapet of the British works and "beat a parley." He could not be heard for the roar of the cannon, but the sergeant who stood by his side waving a white flag was seen. The firing stopped and was never resumed. The siege was over. The victory won.

As the hour for the formal surrender approached, Cornwallis pled that he was far from well, and, turning the command over to O'Hara of the Guards, the only other general officer with his army, he retired to his tent. Colonel Dumas of the French contingent was then sent into Yorktown with orders to direct the British column in the way it should go. As they came out from the fortifications to the field where the actual surrender was to take place, O'Hara kept inquiring of his escort: "Where is General Rochambeau?" As soon as he caught sight of him Dumas pointed Rochambeau out, and O'Hara, putting spurs to his horse, galloped toward him. Suspecting what was planned, Dumas galloped after and succeeded in overtaking him just as he drew rein in front of the French general, who took no notice of him except to indicate that it was Washington, who stood on the right, who was in command, and that it was to him that he should address himself. Dumas now led the mortified guardsman to Washington, and said that as O'Hara drew his sword out of the scabbard to present it, Washington stopped him with the words "not from such a worthy hand," and then turned him over to General Lincoln, who was placed in charge of the proceedings—a recompense for the humiliations to which he had been subjected at the fall of Charleston.⁸

M. Blanchard was also indignant at the behavior of the British. He describes the pother about the sword, and then sums up in these

⁸Washington is, as usual, concise in recording this event which closed the colonial era. The entry in his journal reads: "October 17th. About ten o'clock the Enemy beat a parley."

⁹Dumas' *Memoirs*.

words: "Throughout the whole *triste cérémonie* the English exhibited *morgue* and not a little insolence. Above everything else they showed contempt for the Americans." He stated that in the evening Cornwallis declined to dine with Washington and instead accepted a dinner invitation from M. de Viomesnil.

It is curious to note that from Cornwallis down (see his report to Clinton) all the British officers speak in the highest terms of the friendly aid and the many courtesies extended to them by the French officers, who competed as to who should first have the vanquished to dinner, or who would have the honor of making them a loan. On the other hand, little that is kindly is said of the Americans. A very similar situation developed in regard to the German prisoners who were brought into the Allied camps during World War I. As an almost invariable rule the German prisoners had the same kind things to say of the Americans, and observed the same eloquent silence in regard to the French. On second thoughts it is all natural enough, and the riddle is no riddle if you will but remember whose homes had been destroyed and whose fields had been laid waste. The American soldiers, who had passed through the countries that Cornwallis had devastated and had seen the trail of ashen ruins that Tarleton left behind him wherever he rode north or south, are to be congratulated on conceding to the men captured at Yorktown the rights and privileges of prisoners of war, which, for the most part, they had long since forfeited by their conduct.

It is not without interest to recall how the papers presented the news of the great victory. Without the least personal exertion on the part of the editorial staff, Mr. Greene's Maryland *Gazette* seems to have scored a great "beat." It published the news of the surrender in its issue of October 25, not from a special correspondent at the front, but from "an officer who has reached Annapolis—having left Yorktown on the twentieth—who has favored us with the following narrative of the operations:

"On the morning of the 17th our batteries on our 2nd parallel being complete, we commenced a furious cannonade and bombardment on the enemy's work from 70 pieces of Cannon and mortars and at not more than 250 yards distance. Our operations had now become so serious to the besieged that Lord Cornwallis was induced to beat a parley.' "

No more space or emphasis is given the war news from Virginia than the races or cattle show at Marlboro always commanded, but upon it Mr. Greene did bestow the unusual honor of editorial comment. "The expiring groans," he wrote, "of thousands of Slaves who fled to Lord Cornwallis for protection, and whom he inhumanly starved, have ascended to the throne of Almighty Justice and must bring down vengeance on his guilty head. It is sincerely to be wished for the sake of humanity that his Lordship had made a more obstinate defense, that the Allied army, obliged to storm his works might have offered up him and his troops, a sacrifice to violated rites [*sic*] of humanity."

The little town of York was by all accounts a pitiful sight when the victors marched in and the vanquished were turned over to the militia, to be escorted to the prison cantonments in the highlands of Maryland and Virginia.

"One could not walk three steps without finding big holes made by bombs, cannon balls, and splinters," wrote Closen, "and barely covered graves and the arms and legs of blacks and whites were scattered here and there. Most of the houses were riddled with cannon balls." The Abbé Robin dwelt on the quantity of unburied human limbs lying around "that infected the air," then quickly turning from this unpleasant subject, as a priest and a literary man, he described the books he found in the ruined houses, which he proceeded to salvage. He noted with approval that many of the books were "works of Piety and warm theological controversy." He was glad to find many classics and among them "the works of the famous Pope, and translations of Montaigne's *Essays*, and of Gil Blas, and copies of the *Essay on Women* by Monsieur Thomas." An essay which he said "was then most popular in America and in which society ladies were invited to fill their soul with those sentiments of nature which are born in retreat and grow in Silence."

Cromot du Bourg described, alas! too briefly, the victory dinner of October 20 practically on the battlefield. "On this evening," he wrote, "M. de Rochambeau gave a dinner to General O'Hara and several of the English officers who were now our prisoners. I confess that the *sang-froid*, even the gayety of these gentlemen, amazed me. I could not understand that the very day after such a catastrophe as

had happened to them they could forget it. General O'Hara⁹ talked a great deal and very intelligently. He has traveled widely and has an extensive acquaintance everywhere. When we rose from table we paid a visit to Lord Cornwallis, who had declared himself to be ill the day before. He received us well, indeed in a very proper manner."

It should be noted that the English officers who surrendered at Yorktown did not suffer in reputation because of what Cornwallis called in his despatches this "mortifying" event. Cornwallis himself became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and later Viceroy of India, where he died in 1805. O'Hara, who substituted for the Generalissimo on the historic nineteenth of December 1781, had later the misfortune to be with the English garrison at Toulon when in 1793 it was compelled to surrender to the French. Later he became governor of Gibraltar and this great citadel he did not surrender.

Colonel Abercromby, who directed the attempt to regain the captured redoubts on October 6, died a general, and the same high rank was reached by Graham of the 76th, by Charles Asgill of the Guards, and by Saumarez of the 23rd Regiment, all of whom distinguished themselves in the defensive operations. The hardships of the siege do not seem to have shortened the life of Saumarez, as in a ripe old age he was raised to the rank of lieutenant general by Queen Victoria shortly after her accession to the throne.

Tarleton and Simcoe, never highly esteemed by the colonists, also reached high rank, and the latter enjoyed more friendly American contacts in 1791 when he served as governor of Upper Canada. Wisely the King did not take sides in the controversy which raged for so many years between Cornwallis and Clinton as to where responsibility for the disaster should be placed, although we have the authority of the Court Journal for the statement that on the return of the latter to England in 1782 he was "graciously received" by his sovereign.

The moment the surrender was completed and the prisoners had been sent away, the trenches and the parallels that had been dug so laboriously were filled up and smoothed over, a proceeding which, as the Duke of Liancourt complained, who visited the battlefield some ten years later, robbed the place of much historic charm. But the

⁹Later in command at Toulon and Laccenor-Las in India.

Allied generals had thoughts at the moment which had nothing to do with the preservation of battle landmarks. It seemed to them quite possible that Clinton would land an army from the fleet, now reported outside the capes, and that they, in turn, would have to undergo a siege. In this case they did not want the enemy to find trenches and all manner of helpful approaches ready-made awaiting their coming. So while the officers rested and indulged in the "duties and relaxations of friendship," the privates "spent many days and not a few nights with spade and shovel on fatigue duty, and, as Sanderson's diary¹⁰ makes plain, "it was very fatiguing."

After Orders, October 20, Washington admonished his troops in terms which show that he was not intoxicated with his great success. "Divine service," he wrote, "is to be performed tomorrow in the several brigades and divisions. The Commander in Chief earnestly recommends that the troops not on duty should universally attend, with that seriousness of deportment and gratitude of heart which the recognition of such reiterated and astonishing interpositions of Providence demand of us."

As everyone knows, and as many of the participants in the campaign relate, a very few days after the surrender the reinforcements from New York, so long expected by Cornwallis, came in sight; but young Lieutenant Revel, who sailed with de Grasse, reported this event more in detail than the diarists. "On October 27 the British Fleet appeared at the entrance of the Capes and thirty-one sail were counted on that day. Forty-four sail were counted on the next day; and then on the 29th they had all disappeared. . . . We learned later," wrote Revel, "that Admiral Graves had brought with him from New York the Army under Clinton to succor Lord Cornwallis — *mais il était trop tard. La Poule était mangée.*"¹¹

It was indeed a close shave, but as poor Revel, who went back to the West Indies with de Grasse, was to learn to his cost, it was not long before Britannia again ruled the waves.

Rochambeau never forgot the common soldier, and on the day after the successful attack on the redoubts he ordered "two days' pay to be distributed to the four companies of grenadiers and chasseurs of the regiments of Gatinais and Royal Deux-Ponts, besides a more

¹⁰Quoted by Johnston. *The Yorktown Campaign*, p. 170.

¹¹*Journal Particulier*, p. 168.

considerable reward to the axmen and the pioneers who opened the way for the troops through the abatis and palisades."

When he had rewarded the pioneers and the axmen for the way in which they performed their hazardous duties Rochambeau be-thought him of the superior officers and gave them the praise that was their due. "It is proper," he wrote, "to recognize the merit of M. Duportail [the French engineer officer with Washington], of M. de Querenet, who, during the siege, was at the head of our engineers, and of M. de Aboville, who commanded our artillery, and of General Knox who commanded the artillery of the two nations." He concluded with a nosegay for the Americans in general: "We must render them the justice to say they comported themselves with a zeal, a courage, and with a spirit of emulation which never left them behind in any duty with which they were charged, although they were strangers to the operations of a siege."¹²

The victory only whetted Washington's appetite for the unaccustomed joy. The ink was hardly dry on the capitulations when he made proposals to Rochambeau and to de Grasse to continue and extend in scope the triumphant campaign. This first letter to the admiral is dated October 20 and opens with the sentence which it is to be hoped will be the inscription on the monument that the people of the United States will someday erect to the unfortunate de Grasse, to whose memory an unpaid debt is long overdue. It reads: "The surrender of York from which so great glory and advantage are derived to the Allies, and the honor of which belongs to Your Excellency, has greatly anticipated our most sanguine expectations. Certain of this event under your auspices, though unable to determine the time, I solicited your attention, in the first conference with which you honored me, to ulterior objects of decisive importance to the Common Cause."

Specifically, Washington wanted now to invest Charleston or Savannah, and de Grasse had to tell him of his obligations and commitments in other quarters. Later he agreed to transport the Maryland and the Pennsylvania lines down to the Cape Fear River, with Wilmington or Charleston as their objective. Then, not without reason, however, the admiral changed his mind. He had to be back in the West Indies as soon as possible, he was even now overdue, and

¹²Archives Nat. Guerre. Carton Rochambeau.

while this transport duty might be performed in forty-eight hours, it was also quite possible that it might delay him six weeks—such is wind and weather off the Atlantic coast at this season. Washington sent Lafayette to cajole the admiral, and promised the young Frenchman the command of the American division if he were successful; but both the persuasive letters and the personal appeal failed to change the regretful *non possumus* of the sailor.

The next letter Washington wrote to de Grasse, trying to hold him to the victorious course, dated at Headquarters October 28, 1781, was characteristic of the writer and enlightening as to the situation. "The plan which I have the honor to submit to Your Excellency is that which appears to me most likely to accomplish the great objects of the Alliance. You will have observed that whatever efforts are made by the land armies, the navy must have the casting vote in the present contest. The triumphant manner in which Your Excellency has maintained the mastery of the American seas, and the glory of the French flag, lead both nations to look to you as the arbiter of the war. Public and private motives make me most ardently wish that the next campaign may be calculated to crown all your former victories."

Never was a more politic or a more ingratiating letter written. It was not successful, however, but, pleased as he might well be with praise from such a source, the admiral, ignorant of the fate that awaited him in the West Indies, half promised to bring his ships back to the Chesapeake in the month of May "to proceed against New York or Charleston, as circumstances may indicate as advisable."

Rochambeau also regretted that the French forces should now be divided and that, in consequence, the victorious campaign must come to an end. But he understood the situation better than the Americans, as he had been shown the documents now available in the French archives.

"There was," he said, "a definite agreement, signed and sealed with the Spanish authorities, as to when they might expect the Admiral's return." This was all arranged before de Grasse sailed North, and, in a letter which he wrote to Luzerne in Philadelphia, Rochambeau said: "After all that he has done for us we must believe that he cannot stretch the point [his instructions] even a little

bit farther. It is a pity, because *nous avions beau jeu* [all the odds were in our favor]."¹²

The moment the articles of capitulation were signed "in the trenches," Washington sent Colonel Tench Tilghman with the news and official papers to Congress, then in session in Philadelphia. Tilghman would seem to have crossed the bay to the Eastern Shore of Maryland in a small ketch, and to have been delayed by baffling winds. He arrived on the shore at a place where he was unknown, and when the occupants of the nearest farmhouse were aroused by his loud cry of, "A horse for the Congress! Cornwallis is taken!" they apparently regarded him as a madman, and it was some time before he secured a mount from their stables.

Of Colonel Tilghman, Washington wrote on hearing of his untimely death in Baltimore (April 1786): "He leaves as fair a reputation as ever belonged to a human character." Tilghman was born at the family seat on the Tred Avon River of the Eastern Shore as has been the good fortune of so many gallant gentlemen of Maryland. Wise man that he was, Tilghman left no memoirs, and so the poets of his native state have enjoyed a loose rein in describing his historic ride, or rather journey, bringing to Congress the news of the surrender of Cornwallis. I have no authority to enter upon the controversies on this subject which show no signs of abating, but I am inclined to think that the messenger of victory embarked at the mouth of the York on a swift streamlined Chesapeake Bay log canoe (or it may have been a bug-eye or a pungie) and that on landing at Rock Hall he secured a relay of swift horses that brought him to Philadelphia on the wings of speed.

Tilghman's untimely death at the early age of thirty-seven was due to a bronchial trouble which he contracted during the long heatless and meatless winter at Valley Forge where, as all his sorrowing comrades admitted, he was the outstanding member of the famous "family" who unflinchingly stood by their chief throughout those dark days.

Perhaps Mr. Greene, the great editor of the *Maryland Gazette*, had been too discreet, and his subscribers, who numbered four hundred, had not been kept in sufficiently close touch with current

¹² Archives Nat. Guerre. Carton Rochambeau.

events. Certainly no editor was ever in less need of a censor than this patriarch of the Annapolis press. When the little city on the Severn was bustling with troops embarking for the seat of war, and dispatch boats were darting in and out of the harbor with news of the greatest importance, Mr. Greene was filling his journal with news from Stamboul where "the Great Divan was holding mysterious sessions," or from The Hague, where John Adams was having important conversations "with their High Mightinesses of the Low Countries." Not that Mr. Greene was a pacifist and excluded war news, not at all. While the greatest battle in American history was being decided, and only one hundred and fifty miles away, he gave a spirited account of the extremely thorough way in which that great Moslem, "our friend Hyder Ali, was driving the British out of Bengal into the Indian Ocean." But there's just a chance that Mr. Greene overplayed his discretion. Certain it is that Colonel Tilghman lost much time in explaining what had happened and why he had the right to the best riding colts that the "Shore" could furnish him with.

It was nearly four days after leaving Yorktown, and past midnight on the twenty-third of October, that Tilghman reached Philadelphia and reined up his tired steed in front of the lodgings of Thomas McKean, president of the Congress. His respectful taps with the knocker being ignored, Tilghman began to beat on the door, crying out loudly, "News, news, great news! Cornwallis is taken!" No one stirred in the house, but the street watchmen were attracted and they came toward the messenger of victory with their halberds leveled at the "roistering young fellow who had bided too long at his cups," as they thought and said.

They had placed the messenger of victory under arrest and were leading him away when Mr. McKean, poking his head out of the window, recognized the Maryland colonel and had him released. Soon the bells in the belfry of Independence Hall were pealing out the great tidings, and every man, woman, and child in Philadelphia was astir, exchanging congratulations.

ILLUMINATION!!!

Colonel Tilghman, Aide de Camp to his Excellency Gen. Washington, having brought official accounts of the SURRENDER OF LORD CORN-

WALLIS and the GARRISONS of YORK and GLOUCESTER—those Citizens who chuse to ILLUMINATE on the Glorious Occasion will do it this evening at SIX and extinguish their lights at NINE O'Clock.

Decorum and harmony are earnestly recommended to every Citizen and a general discountenance to the least appearance of Riot.

OCT. 24th—1781.

So reads the official announcement that on this memorable day was placarded on all the public buildings and most of the churches. While decorum and harmony were doubtless maintained from other sources we learn that there was a "hot time" in the Quaker City that night and that the official Illumination continued long after nine o'clock.

By daylight, the *Freeman's Journal* had issued an "extra sheet" with a headline in bold letters which read, "How Are the Mighty Fallen." It was illustrated, too, in a way—this modest forerunner of our war bulletins. There was the seal of the state of Pennsylvania with the legend, "Virtue—Liberty—Independence," and underneath lay the arms of the British Crown bottom side up. It was, I suppose, the editor's answer to the British band that played at Yorktown when Cornwallis' men came out to lay down their arms—the march entitled, "The World Turned Upside Down."

At last Washington had had the pleasure of signing a bulletin of victory and Tench Tilghman brought it with him. It read: "I have the honor to inform Congress that a reduction of the British Army under the command of Lord Cornwallis is most happily effected. Our correspondence was followed by the definite capitulation which was agreed to and signed on the 19th, a copy of which is also herewith transmitted and which I hope will meet the approbation of Congress."

Then follow these words of generous recognition: "Nothing could equal the zeal of our Allies, but the emulating spirit of the American officers and soldiers whose ardour would not suffer their exertions to be exceeded. I wish it was in my power to express to Congress how much I feel myself indebted to Count de Grasse and the officers of the fleet under his command for the distinguished aid and support which has been afforded by them, between whom and the army the most happy concurrence of sentiments and views has subsisted and

from whom every possible co-operation has been experienced which the most harmonious intercourse could afford."¹⁴

In its issue of November 7 the *Freeman's Journal* described a scene which reveals that a fever of warlike exultation was soon running high in the City of Brotherly Love:

"On Saturday afternoon last, between the hours of 3 and 4, arrived here 24 regimental Standards, taken with the British and German forces under Lord Cornwallis. They were received by the volunteer cavalry and conducted into town, displayed in a long procession, preceded by the American and French colors—at a proper distance. They were paraded through the principal streets amid the joyful acclamations of surrounding multitudes. At the State House, the hostile Standards were laid at the feet of Congress and His Excellency, the Ambassador of France—a noble and exalted Memorial of the Victory gained by the Allied forces over the Slaves of tyranny and oppression."

In explanation of his choice of Lauzun and Deux-Ponts as messengers of victory to Paris, Rochambeau wrote to the Minister of War these flattering words, "They are the two officers of rank who have most distinguished themselves." Lauzun carried the dispatches and, as the record reveals, the *duplicata* and the *mémoire pour les Grâces*, or the memorandum suggesting rewards and promotions, was entrusted to Deux-Ponts. They embarked on separate vessels and, while both were chased by British cruisers, they escaped capture and made excellent time to the shore of France. "My news caused the King great joy," wrote Lauzun. "I found the Queen with him; upon his questioning me, I told him I intended to return to America, and he asked me to assure the Army that it would be treated handsomely—better than any other army had ever been." Deux-Ponts wrote that he reached France "after a stormy voyage of nineteen days," and added, "on the twenty-fourth of November I enjoyed the inexpressible joy of embracing at Versailles those who are to me the dearest."

Immediately after hearing the great news, Louis XVI sent a noble message to his victorious general. "The successes of my armies," he wrote, "are never pleasing or flattering to me save as they mark an

¹⁴Ford's *Writings of Washington*.

advance in progress toward Peace. I have given orders to the Archbishops and the Bishops of my Kingdom to have *Te Deum* sung in the churches of their dioceses, and with this letter I express the wish that the *Te Deum* also be sung in the town or camp, wherever my letter may find the army corps which you command."

Vergennes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote in a similarly laudatory strain: "You have covered our arms with great *éclat*, and you have laid the cornerstone upon which we shall raise the edifice of an honorable peace." Ségur, the War Minister, went into greater detail when he wrote to Rochambeau: "The King, my royal master, bids me inform you how pleased he is that he gave to you the command of his army in America. The excellent discipline and order you maintained among the troops, the military talent you displayed on every occasion, the conciliatory spirit which you have exhibited in all the arrangements and operations carried out with General Washington have completely fulfilled every expectation of His Majesty."¹⁵

The King did not rest content with these words of praise through his ministers or with his first brief message. On the very day the news was received he drew up another letter to Rochambeau which he adorned with his seal and sign manual. He spoke very sympathetically of the hardships and sufferings that the campaign had imposed upon officers and men alike, and again he stressed the fact that he welcomed victory with joy only because it promised peace. "In calling these events to mind and in acknowledging how much the abilities of General Washington, your talents, those of the general officers under both of you, and the valor of the troops, have rendered this campaign glorious, my chief purpose is to inspire in the hearts of all as well as in my own, the deepest gratitude toward the Author of all prosperity." Again the King gave his royal commands in regard to the singing of a victory mass and concluded with the words: "And I beseech God to keep you under His holy protection."¹⁶

It seems very probable that M. de Rochambeau ordered the ceremony of thanksgiving in Virginia on his own initiative. It was celebrated on the fifteenth of December, some days before there was any likelihood of the King's orders having reached America, and M. de Closen gave us a graphic account of what happened in Williams-

¹⁵Archives Nat. Guerre. Carton Rochambeau.

¹⁶Ibid.

burg, where the French Army now had its headquarters. "On the 15th of December," he wrote, "the *Te Deum* was sung here. Congress had ordered festivities in honor of the day all over the country. The Garrison moved out to Parade and gave three Salutes, followed by *vive le Roi*, and it was concluded by a volley from the Artillery.

"M. de Rochambeau invited the most prominent citizens of the country to a Banquet which was followed by a Ball to which the ladies were also invited. The fair sex of this city show a partiality for the Minuet and dance it fairly well; undoubtedly better than the ladies of the North who excel in the Schottish. The ladies without exception are charmed with our French quadrilles and also find our French manners after their taste."¹⁷

It had been expected that the bearers of the victory dispatches, who had been selected because of distinguished services, would be handsomely rewarded, but only one of them was. Count William Forbach de Deux-Ponts, to give him his full title, was made a full colonel and given the coveted order of St. Louis. He was also promised the command of a regiment when the next vacancy occurred.

De Lauzun was ignored. He explained¹⁸ this difference in treatment by saying that his good friend, M. de Maurepas, had died and that M. de Castries, head of the Navy, and M. de Ségur, the Minister of War, were small enough to avail themselves of this opportunity to pay off a score of long standing. Apparently none of the royal promises to Lauzun were kept, and the four hundred men of his legion who had been left behind at Brest were sent off to unhealthy Senegal. He added by way of explanation that of course de Castries, Minister of Marine, had wished his son, the Count de Charlus, to have the honor of bringing the great news to Paris, and that poor Rochambeau was never forgiven for the choice, based on merit, that he had made. This may account for the confusion that prevails in the histories as to the promotion that Rochambeau himself received. It is frequently stated that he was given the baton of a marshal of France immediately upon his return from America, but the official records show that this honor was accorded years later—in 1791.

¹⁷Apparently the letter with the royal commands did not reach America for many months. The excerpts given above are taken from the *Pennsylvania Packet* of May 7, 1782.

¹⁸*Memoirs.*

Of the hundreds of American soldiers and the thousands of French who attended the service of thanksgiving for the victory that had been won in November of 1781, celebrated with such pomp in the cathedral church of Our Lady of Paris, there were a few, doubtless, but certainly not many, who recalled that in these hallowed precincts a mass of thanksgiving had been held by order of Louis XVI in gratitude for the victory at Yorktown. And that further the royal command ran: "All the inhabitants of Paris will illuminate on November 27 the fronts of their houses to celebrate with due respect the great victory gained in America, both by land and sea, over the English, by the armies of the King combined with those commanded by General Washington." But that is all we know of what happened in Paris on armistice night, 1781.

Of course George III took his bitter medicine in the way that was to be expected. For a time he said nothing, but months later, when the news from Virginia had soaked into more intelligent minds than his own, and it was evident to Parliament that the colonies were lost, he wrote to the Earl of Shelburne:

"I cannot conclude without mentioning how sensibly I feel the dismemberment of America from this Empire, and that I should be miserable indeed if I did not feel that no blame on that account can be laid at my door. And did I not also know that Knavery seems to be so much the striking feature of its inhabitants that it may not in the end be an evil that they will become aliens to this Kingdom."

But the stubborn and probably already mad King was now abandoned by his loyal Commons. As early as February 22, 1782, General Conway had moved an address to the Throne in favor of a discontinuance of the American war and urging "a happy reconciliation with the revolted Colonies"; it was lost by only one vote. Two weeks later a stronger and more imperative motion was passed. It read: "The House would consider as enemies to His Majesty, and to the Country, all those who should advise, or by any means attempt, the further prosecution of the war on the continent of North America, for the purpose of reducing the revolting Colonies to obedience by force."

Peace was now assured, provisional articles were signed on November 30, 1782, and the definite treaty on September 3 of the fol-

lowing year. M. de la Luzerne described in his dispatch to Paris¹⁹ how, as together they read the announcement of peace, "tears flowed freely from Washington's eyes," and that after a pause he said, "this is the happiest moment of my life"—the long struggle was over and independence won.

¹⁹Archives Nat. Marine. Carton Rochambeau.

The Winter in Williamsburg

WASHINGTON was not to enjoy many hours of unalloyed happiness as a result of the long-deferred victory. On the evening of the surrender a courier arrived from Eltham, about forty miles up the York River, the seat of Colonel Burwell Bassett, who had married Mrs. Washington's sister. Here Mrs. Washington's adored son Jacky Custis had been sent early in the siege. Although not in robust health, the young man had insisted on acting as an aide to his stepfather, and after a few days of exposure he had come down with what was pronounced to be "camp fever." Hearing that the boy, the idol of his mother, was in a desperate condition, Washington, several days later, mounted his horse and rode through the night to be with him at the end, which was not long delayed. He died on the day following Washington's arrival (November 5) and was buried in the Eltham garden. While always referred to as a boy, "Jacky" Custis¹ had married very young and was the father of several children, who grew up to be the cherished companions of Mrs. Washington in her years of widowhood.

Never before nor since have the burghers of the quiet university town witnessed such a scene as was flashed upon their astonished eyes as the Allied troops marched into Williamsburg seeking refuge from the destruction that had overtaken and the pestilence that now beset captured York. The soldiers who came down from the North with Rochambeau were weather-beaten, and their costumes

¹John Parke Custis.

had doubtless assumed the protective coloring of the American scene, but the uniforms of the regiments and the battalions that the Marquis de Saint-Simon brought with him from the West Indies exhibited as many colors as ever were displayed on Joseph's coat. Theirs indeed must have been the first Rainbow Division in the military history of America. As most suitable for tropical service, their uniforms were white for the most part, but the men of the Royal Auvergne wore violet lapels on their tunics with yellow buttons and violet-hued collars. The men of the famous Gatinais regiment had violet lapels and dark yellow collars, while the dashing men of the Agenais regiment sported green collars and pink lapels to their tunics. Truly the ragged Continentals and the skin-clad Virginia militia, as d'Auteville describes them, must have been dazzled by the color scheme of their most welcome Allies.

The important part that the Royal French Navy had played was not ignored in the victory pageant that was now unfolded, but we could wish that the official record of the proceedings had been more extended. Brief as it is, it is eloquent, and besides it is all that is available. In the National Archives² I find this entry:

"On October 21st, at half past 1 o'clock, the Armée [as the Fleet is generally described] *mit pavillon et flamme et on pavoisa* on the occasion of the coming of General Washington, who dined on board the *Ville de Paris*, and at half past three a number of cannon were fired in Sign of Joy."

The shot that was fired at Concord had at last reached its billet, but the world-wide consequences of the surrender of Cornwallis were at first not apparent to all. In the midst of the enthusiasm over the victory which two continents shared, Franklin, the Sage of Passy, remained cool, calm, and collected. He did not think the war was over, not even when his good friend Madame Brillon wrote him the following letter of reproach:

"My dear Papa; I am Sulky with you—What? You capture whole armies! You Burgoyneize Cornwallis! You capture everything! Your friends go out of their heads drinking your health and that of Washington, of M. Rochambeau and M. Chastellux, and You? You give them no Sign of life!"

²Marine B4-184.

Wise Franklin wrote back in bad French but with admirable good sense:

"I fully appreciate the magnitude of our success and the possible excellent consequences which may flow from it. But, knowing the uncertainties of war, when Fortune frowns, I hope for her smiles, and when she smiles I fear her frowns—So I do not exult."

A few weeks later, when all the Americans had gone North, to resume their posts along the Hudson, Rochambeau, with the plans for the next campaign still in the air, went into winter quarters and for strategic reasons, as well as to facilitate the problems of subsistence, he scattered his detachments pretty widely throughout the peninsula between the James and the York. The legion of Lauzun, now under M. de Choisy, went to Hampton. The Soissonais regiment, the grenadiers, and the chasseurs of Saintonge, remained at Yorktown, with several batteries of artillery at Gloucester across the river. The remaining companies of the Saintonge regiment were stationed at the Halfway House, between York and Hampton. But the bulk of the French forces were ordered to Williamsburg, and here Rochambeau established his headquarters. He had with him also the Bourbonnais regiment and all of the Deux-Ponts regiment, except three companies which were detached and spent the winter at Jamestown, the cradle of the colonies the French had helped to establish as a nation. The siege guns were parked at West Point some distance up the York River, where it was thought they would be safer from a possible attack by the British fleet which was once again hovering off the capes. In January Lauzun's legion was ordered from Hampton to Peytonsburg on the Roanoke River, where this quick-moving corps would be within supporting distance of Greene in the Carolinas. A scouting party sent ahead reported that in mid-winter this journey of two hundred and forty miles would not be practicable until the snows had melted and the roads dried out. Even in the early spring, when an attempt was made to carry out these orders, one battalion was stopped at Charlotte Courthouse and the other at Petersburg by impassable roads. Doubtless, in the meantime, more reassuring news had been received from the Carolinas. In any event, the orders and reports still preserved in the French Ministry of War are lacking in precision.

In the French archives there is in manuscript a careful description

of Williamsburg at this period that seems to deserve more attention than it has received. It is from the pen of the Chevalier d'Aucteville of the Royal Engineers, to whom we are already indebted, who came up from the West Indies with Saint-Simon.

"Williamsburg is a handsome American town," he writes, "four miles from York and between the river of that name and the James. It has only one principal street; it is traversed from East to West also by a broad street, and by several other transverse streets from North to South.

"The principal street is blocked at both extremities by two handsome edifices—the college at the West end and the capitol at the East. There is the house of the Governor, a church, a government house, and a good many other handsome private houses built of brick and crowned with domes and peristyles. A great number of the other houses are constructed of wood and planks *en recouvrement*, carefully built with taste and propriety and some even have colonnades.

"Upon nearly all the houses there are lightning rods [*conducteurs*]. The chimneys are all of brick, often outside the houses, and rising far above the roofs. Almost all of them are capped with cut stone placed carefully and symmetrically; also upon all the roofs are to be seen fire escapes—*des échelles contre le danger des incendies*."³

D'Aucteville is the same keen observer to whom we are indebted for the description of the Virginia militia printed on a previous page. His description of Williamsburg has hitherto escaped notice because it was misplaced in the carton marked "Pensacola," where I came across it in 1932.

Rochambeau does not dwell upon the plan of Williamsburg and its architecture as does the young naval lieutenant, but he is an ardent believer in the lightning rods which d'Aucteville describes. Writing to the Marquis de Ségur, then Minister of War, from Williamsburg under date of April 14, 1782, he says:

"It was lucky for him that M. de Luzerne (the French Minister) has been paying us a visit. Had he remained in Philadelphia it is probable he would have been killed by the lightning flash which fell upon his house, where, as a result, his bed and everything else was destroyed by fire. M. de Meaux, lieutenant of artillery, who was

³Archives Hist. Marine. B4 184-147.

convalescing at M. de Luzerne's residence, was killed. This fatality is a strong argument in favor of the *conducteurs* [lightning rods]. The owner of the house in which M. de Luzerne lodged had always opposed the system of M. Franklin and had refused permission to have it installed."⁴

During the long months of mild winter weather Rochambeau visited much throughout the peninsula. He liked the planters and they liked him, and he wrote, "Where the ravages of war have not been felt the people live at their ease. The little Negro is ever busy clearing and laying the table." He told of the great dinners and the hunting breakfasts that were given him and admitted he loved fox hunting; his aide, Closen, went into details of the Virginia sport: "We have forced more than thirty foxes. The packs of hounds of the local gentlemen are perfect," he reported.

During his many leisure hours, while the troops were in winter quarters, Closen made a number of silhouettes of the young ladies with whom he danced or with whom he followed the hounds. He sent them to Europe to his beloved Doris, whom he married at Zweibrücken on his return from America in 1783. Their profiles, and what he calls "the simplicity and oddity of their coiffures," have been preserved in a Bavarian Schloss to this day. The names of the Virginia belles he celebrated in this way are Madame Nelson, née Tagliaferro, Madame Carter, Madame Nelson, née Carter, Miss Blair, Miss Cary, Miss Harrison, and Miss Lucy Randolph, all of whom seem to have belonged to the great clan of Turkey islanders, so important and so numerous in the annals of the Old Dominion.

During the long winter some of the young officers indulged in other pursuits than fox hunting or dances at the homes of the hospitable planters, where there were so many pretty girls, and some there were who sought to improve their minds and to know more in detail the country whose continued independence they had assured. Some went to the blackened ruins of the famous Mary Wilson's house at Blunt Point on the James, which Lord Dunmore had ordered burned to the ground before he took refuge on his fleet and sailed to New York. Many were glad that the Scotch earl had overlooked in his destructive program the Raleigh Tavern, which had become their clubhouse, where they took their ease in the com-

⁴Archives Hist. Guerre, 3734.

fortable inn, which, according to the local legend, Mary Wilson had built to lodge her third husband, Archibald Blair, the younger brother of John Blair, the commissary.

Among the more serious-minded was the intelligent Bavarian, Closen. He seems to have been the first of the innumerable pilgrims who visited Jefferson at Monticello—pilgrims who, with the passing of time and the spread of his fame, became so numerous that Jefferson had to seek refuge from the duties of hospitality at his beautiful but distant estate of Poplar Forest on the Upper James, beyond Lynchburg. Though the great Virginian was still a young man, in his forties, this pilgrim from abroad hailed him as a philosopher and sage. He wrote:

"The home of the philosopher is very handsome and adorned with a colonnade, the platform of which is very prettily fitted out with all sorts of mythological scenes." Closen described Jefferson "as very learned in *belles lettres*, in history and geography, and he is better versed than anyone in the statistics of America in general. He speaks all the chief languages to perfection. His library is well chosen and still large in spite of the marauding visit of a detachment from Tarleton's legion which proved costly and greatly alarmed the family."⁵

It is evident that Rochambeau got on admirably with the professors of William and Mary when they returned to their Alma Mater, and he probably had many opportunities of again speaking Latin. They gave him warmest thanks for the restoration of the college building that had suffered from a fire, an accident, as the professors admit, "that often eludes all possible precaution." They refer to many other substantial advantages the country had received through its connection with France. They foresaw many benefits to come, and wrote: "We are persuaded that the improvement of useful knowledge will not be the least—a number of distinguished characters in your Army afford us the happiest presage that science as well as liberty will acquire vigor from the fostering hands of your Nation."

⁵Here at least de Closen would seem to be misinformed. Jefferson says, in a letter still extant, that although Tarleton's swashbucklers on their visit to Monticello pillaged and even wrecked many of his other properties and gutted his wine cellar, they left his books severely alone.

The King was pleased with this correspondence, when it reached him through official channels, and, to strengthen still further the intellectual ties, he, out of his royal bounty, sent to the college in Virginia "two hundred volumes of the greatest and best French Works." Unhappily they arrived somewhat damaged, and the vicissitudes of the other wars that have so often devastated the ancient university town of Virginia have taken their heavy toll, so of the generous donation only two volumes survive today. They may be seen under glass in the library. They are parts of a great work on astronomy by M. Bailly.

According to the memoirs of the period, M. Bailly (Jean Sylvain) first achieved fame in the cold realm of science by "calculating an orbit for the comet of 1759" (Halley's). He was immediately elected a member of the Academy of Science, but very soon he abandoned the celestial sphere and became involved in politics of the most terrestrial description. In 1789 he was chosen president of the Third Estate, and later became mayor of Paris. In the Carnavalet there is a charming print of M. Bailly presiding over the proceedings in the tennis court. His part in the dispersal of the mobs in the Champ de Mars in July 1791 rendered him unpopular with the people, and he retired to the country and resumed his astronomical researches. Two years later he was arrested in Melun, brought to Paris, and guillotined in the presence of a howling mob, which subjected the unfortunate stargazer to every indignity.

Count Montesquieu (Anne Pierre), who figures in the chronicle of the winter diaries, was a close friend and constant companion of the popular Fleury. He came of the ancient Armagnac family, and on his return from America he succeeded to the marquise. He was brought up in the same nursery as the unfortunate children of the King, but despite his family and court associations was strongly imbued with liberal ideas. Elected to the States General in 1789, in 1791 he became president of the Constituent Assembly. Serving for a time with Lafayette, he commanded the Army of the South in 1792. Charged with Royalist leanings and clemency to his prisoners, he escaped the guillotine only by fleeing to Switzerland. In the Carnavalet there is also a print of this soldier of Yorktown. It represents him at the head of his troops, entering Chambéry, before the days of the Terror dawned.

As the schools were closed Rochambeau took up his quarters in one of the college buildings. Another that was used as a hospital most unfortunately caught fire, and the general paid for the restoration out of his war chest. There is a tradition that, hearing of this mischance, the French King insisted upon restoring the damaged building out of the none-too-ample resources of his privy purse. This must have been especially agreeable to the general, as at this time he himself was also in great need of financial assistance.

The legislatures of practically all the states, as the great news of the victory reached them, drew up addresses of congratulation in which was expressed fervent gratitude to the French and their commander. Doubtless at this time, when his days were extremely occupied with the responsibility and the care of an army three thousand miles from its base, and all his thoughts taken up with what the next move would be, and what Paris might order, Count de Rochambeau gave these documents but scant attention. In after years, as his papers now in the Library of Congress reveal, when his life was menaced by his own people and the world had passed him by, they were a source of comfort and of consolation.

In his old age and retirement on his estate in Vendôme, he still tried to keep up, and, if possible, to extend, his hardly earned knowledge of English; with these memoranda are many drafts in the general's handwriting which would seem to indicate how pleasant it was for him to decipher and put in his own language the words of praise and thanksgiving. While he is at times misled as to the letter, the warm and friendly spirit of those who addressed him in the hour of their liberation never escaped him.

It would seem as though the address of the people of Maryland, voiced by the Assembly, was particularly pleasing to the French commander, not only because it revealed full appreciation of his success as a soldier, but because it adds a word of thanks to him for removing the ancient prejudice that had been cultivated in this and in all the other English colonies against everything that was French. The resolution reads: "We view with regret the approaching departure of troops who have so conducted, so endeared, and so distinguished themselves, and we pray that the laurels they have gathered before Yorktown may never fade, and that to whatever quarter of the globe they direct their arms victory may follow their Standard. To preserve

in troops far removed from their own country the strictest discipline and to convert into esteem and affection deep and ancient prejudices was reserved for you." Little wonder that Rochambeau should in later years have held this yellow parchment lovingly in his hands and sought to translate the praise it contained into the language of the people whose soldiers had merited such honorable commendation.

M. de la Luzerne, the French Minister in Philadelphia, when he wrote to Rochambeau under date of October 8, 1782, put the matter admirably, and in small compass: "Your well-behaved and gallant army has not only contributed to put an end to the success of the English in this country, but has destroyed in three years prejudices that had become deep-rooted in the course of three centuries."⁶

Many of the soldiers from across the seas who took their ease in the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg after the victory was secured were world travelers. They opened new horizons to the sons of these Virginian planters who had as loyal North Americans seen overseas service and participated in the sieges of Cartagena and of Havana. They had fought in far-off campaigns in many distant lands as had Lauzun and Colonel de Choisy. Certainly this colonel was not one who would be content to rest on the laurels gained in the Polish war. It was he who directed the artillery on the Gloucester front and it was he who, aided powerfully by the autumnal storm that most opportunely swept the York River that fateful October night, blocked the only energetic effort Cornwallis made to escape from the trap in which he found himself from the moment Britain lost her traditional control of the seas.

The sailors were represented, too, by men whom Chastellux speaks of as "respectable characters." Outstanding among the sea dogs were Louis Antoine Bougainville who, as the record shows, was there not infrequently, and also in all probability M. de la Pérouse, who must have enjoyed a few days of shore leave and relief from the command of his frigate, which faced the storms of the Atlantic through so many months of the American war.

Bougainville, celebrated in two worlds as an explorer and a raconteur, had enjoyed many experiences which must have de-

⁶Archives Hist. Guerre; Carton Rochambeau.

lighted his listeners in the Apollo Room of the Virginia tavern. He was almost an American in the versatile way in which he had tried out many pursuits before he found his sea legs and stood on them to the end. Behind the tree plant with the flaming flowers that bears his name throughout the tropical world there is a story that must have thrilled all who heard it as it does even to this day the few who have come across the modest narrative, so simply told, of his great voyages through uncharted seas. Strangely enough, the island and the strait which he explored and which bear his name have become the scene of many a battle on both land and sea for the supremacy in the Pacific in World War II.

In obedience to his father's wishes young Bougainville studied law and was expected to become a notary. It would have been the easy course for him to pursue, as at this time his father stood at the head of the Paris bar. After but a few months of what he called this "intolerable drudgery," the young man joined the Army and soon was gazetted as a captain of musketeers. A year later the young swashbuckler became enamored with mathematics and wrote a book about integral calculus! When he reached the ripe age of twenty-six Bougainville went to London, where he was appointed secretary of the French Embassy and also, in recognition of his mathematical "calculations," was elected a member of the Royal Society. War alarms disturbed what promised to be a studious and a sedentary career, and he went to Canada and throughout the campaign served under Montcalm as a captain of dragoons. Here the member of the Royal Society was taken prisoner at the battle of the Plains of Abraham. During his sojourn in Canada Bougainville got on excellent terms with a group of Algonquin Indians, who were pro-French, and, as he related with great pride, they brought him into their tribe as an adopted son.

He came out of the war as a colonel, with the coveted distinction of the Cross of St. Louis on his breast. Bored, now that something like peace had descended upon the world, Bougainville threw up his commission and decided to found another French overseas empire to replace the one taken by the land-hungry British. He was attracted by the great open spaces in the South Atlantic and the Antarctic area, and decided to colonize the Falkland Islands, then without human inhabitants. He had come into quite a fortune on his

father's death, and a goodly part of this he spent in making a settlement in this lonely region. But a clash of interests developed. There were no Spaniards or anyone else on the islands, but Madrid claimed that they lay well within her sphere of influence and a diplomatic battle ensued. The King, for obvious reasons, wished to remain on friendly terms with the Spaniards and finally induced Bougainville to abandon the project. To soften his disappointment, he repaid all the money he had spent on the colonial adventure. In addition (kings were kings in those days!) he made the ex-colonel of dragoons the captain of a well-found frigate, the *Boudeuse*, and told him to sail around the world on a voyage of discovery, but to avoid friction with the Spaniards.

The first port of call after leaving Brest was on the coveted islands. In the grand manner Bougainville hauled down his flag and then, through the Straits of Magellan, sailed into the Pacific world, unknown to him and to almost everyone else. He visited Tahiti, Samoa, the New Hebrides, the Moluccas, and the Solomon Islands, and in 1769 he brought his ship back to Brest, having lost only seven men out of his complement of two hundred by scurvy—an almost unheard-of record in those days.

Bougainville, after these tropical experiences, was fascinated by the possibilities of the Arctic regions and was consumed with a desire to discover the North Pole. He beset the Admiralty and the King with this plan and was gaining support when the war came. In 1779 he returned to the Navy and was given command of the frigate *Auguste*. Under de Grasse, he and his ship played an important part in the naval battle off the Virginia Capes on September 5 which made the victory at York possible, indeed even inevitable.

During his visits to Williamsburg the circumnavigator of the world enlightened the faculty as to the advantages that would flow from a closer view of the Arctic regions, but soon he was returning to the tropics in the wake of de Grasse. He was with his admiral, he was indeed now in command of a division composed of eight heavy ships, when Rodney swooped down upon the French fleet. He escaped to Cape St. Francis after the battle was lost, with all the vessels of his squadron battered but still afloat. The following summer he was in Boston, where Yankee shipwrights and New England forests supplied the tall masts that had gone overboard in

the disastrous sea fight off Les Saintes. On his return to France a year later he found the King still colder to Arctic explorations than he had been before. In fact, he was fobbed off with a place on the Board of Longitude, at the time generally regarded as a haven for sailors whose active services were to be dispensed with. He was a vice-admiral, on shore duty, however, in 1791, and in the following year, being the most Royalist of the Royalists, he narrowly escaped massacre by the mobs that had gained control of Paris.

Years later, when Napoleon had risen to power, he often visited the great sailor in his snug harbor and listened to his peregrinations. He made him a senator, and count of the Empire. One of the Solomon Islands and a near-by strait bear his name—the dark and bloody ground where we fought and defeated the Japanese—but it is the tree with the flaming flowers that he brought back from South America that keeps fragrant the memory of the gallant sailor who contributed to American independence and who enlarged the horizons of those who listened to his travels on winter evenings in the inn at Williamsburg.

M. de la Pérouse, too, may have sat at the feet of his predecessor in world navigation in the Virginia inn, but we have no record of this confrontation. However, he commanded a frigate⁷ under d'Estaing in what is called the "*Affaire de Newport*." He seems to have missed the battle off the Virginia Capes, but he turned up at Boston in 1782, and returned to France with his ship in the following year. Then, with two stout ships, he, too, sought to circumnavigate the globe. With the voyage more than half completed he disappeared from view, and only fifty years later was the wreckage of his ships found on an Australian reef. Fortunately most of his records had been sent to France overland from Kamchatka before starting for the South Seas, so only the log of the last few weeks of this notable cruise of a man who contributed to American independence is lost. He was gratefully remembered by a group of Americans who, during the Peace Conference of 1919, foregathered in the restaurant that bears his name, and who sought, by the excellent food that was served there, to still the land hunger of many of the contending powers.

Immediately after the glorious day at Yorktown M. de Chastel-

'L'Amazone—thirty-two guns.

lux, who commanded a brigade of the French troops under Rochambeau, planned to turn his men over to his second in command, and thus freed from military red tape and responsibilities, to resume his studies of the American scene and the "rising Empire in the West," which Washington and others were continually urging him to do. But Rochambeau, like many other hard-bitten soldiers, did not altogether approve of a scribbling subordinate. So it came about that the chevalier did not escape from his camp duties until early April 1782.

When he at last got away from the little university town and started on his Virginia tour, which fills so many interesting pages in the chronicle of his American travels,* it must be admitted that he went in style. He was accompanied by his first aide, M. Lynch, a talented Irishman, who in later life rose to high rank in the French Army; by Count Dillon, another Irish *émigré*, whom we cannot identify more closely because there were three Counts Dillon in Rochambeau's army, all of them serving with distinction. There was also an engineer officer, a Major d'Oyre, who came up from the West Indies with Saint-Simon. These gentlemen made quite a cortege with their six mounted servants and a pack horse. Each gentleman had his second charger, or *relais*. The moment they left the tidewater country behind them they made a beeline for the "little mountain" upon which Thomas Jefferson was erecting the home in which he hoped to live in retirement from political life—a hope he was not to realize for many years to come. This cortege was the advance guard of that invasion which, in later years, drove the Sage of Monticello so frequently away from his beloved home on the summit of the Little Mountain to his hideaway at the Poplar Forest plantation one hundred and fifty miles inland.

Like many wayfarers in strange lands Chastellux lost his way but, clever man that he was, he profited by this misadventure, and, as a matter of fact, so do we. He fell in with a transplanted Irishman who had fought with the Continentals and still had a bullet in his shoulder to show that he got to the front. Besides the bullet he had acquired a farm in North Carolina, where he raised horses. As a matter of fact at that very moment he was riding circuit, as it were, in

**Voyage de M. le Marquis de Chastellux dans l'Amérique Septentrionale, Paris, 1786.*

the hope of selling some of his colts to the horse-loving Virginians. Chastellux learned much that is interesting from his chance acquaintance, who developed into a providential guide, and much of it he retained in his travel diary. The Irish soldier related that the great, the crying need of the colonists was nails! All their other needs could be secured with ax and saw, but nails were lacking. "We cure our own leather to make shoes," he related, "and the wool of our sheep gives us raiment—but as to drinkables there seems to be a bottleneck. We are forced to content ourselves with milk or water until the apple trees become fruit-bearing." Then a word of explanation in answer to the French traveler's inquiry, "Yes, of course we can roof our houses without nails, but it takes longer—and is very laborious." The intelligent Irishman who traveled four hundred miles to find a market for his colts went several miles farther out of his way to help the strangers to find their goal. Chastellux wrote:

"He brought me to the foot of the mountain and it was not difficult to recognize the Maison de M. Jefferson on the summit, for one can say it shines alone in its retirement (*qu'elle brille seul en ces retraites*). M. Jefferson chose this site and built his house on this spot although he possessed other and more extensive lands, and indeed he could have established himself wherever he wished. But Nature owed to a Sage, and a man of taste, the gift of a place on his own inheritance where best he could enjoy and study. He calls his home place Monticello, a very modest name indeed in view of the fact that it is placed on a very high mountain; however, it reveals the way in which the proprietor is attached to the language that is spoken in Italy, and above all to the Beaux Arts of which this country was the cradle and where they still have asylum.

"Leaving my Irish friend and having climbed for about half an hour up a comfortable road I arrived at the summit." . . . At great length the French traveler then describes the house and its architectural details, but as the beauty of this shrine is (or should be) familiar to all Americans, I shall omit them here. Indeed even Chastellux concludes his description with these words:

It is not for the purpose of describing the house that I enter into these details; it is to prove that it has no resemblance to the other houses one sees in this country. In fact one can say that M. Jefferson

is the first American who has consulted the Beaux Arts to learn how he should be lodged.

But if it is of him that I should occupy myself I should paint a man who is not yet forty, tall of figure with pleasant and agreeable features, and yet truly he is a man whose wit and knowledge would have taken the place of these attractive qualities—had they been lacking. He is an American who while he has never traveled out of his country is a musician, a designer, a mathematician, an astronomer, a physician, a jurisconsult, a statesman, and a Senator of America who sat for two years in the famous Congress, and he is the Father of the Revolution of which they always speak here with respect. He was also the Governor of Virginia, and he filled that difficult post during the invasions of Arnold, of Phillips, and Cornwallis, and last but not least he is the philosopher who has withdrawn from the world and from affairs because he does not love the world except on those occasions when he can flatter himself that he can be useful to it. He is surrounded by a charming and amiable wife and by pretty children who he is at pains to educate. He has a house to beautify, great landed possessions to improve, and the sciences and the arts to cultivate. This is what remains to M. Jefferson after having played a great role in the theater of the New World. And this role he has preferred to the honorable commission that was offered to him, to become the Minister Plenipotentiary of America to Europe. [Some months later, after the death of his beloved wife, Jefferson did accept the mission to France.] My visit was not unexpected; long before this he had asked me to spend some days with him in his society at his home encircled by mountains. At first I found his bearing serious and even cold, but when I had passed two hours with him I thought, I believed, that I had been with him all my life. There was the promenade, the library, and above all our conversation always varied, always interesting, always sustained. It gave us the satisfaction which two people feel who, after exchanging their opinions and their sentiments, find themselves in agreement and able to understand each other *à demi-mot*. Not only were our tastes similar, even our predilections were identical! Those predilections which dry and methodical spirits ridicule and call in contempt "enthusiasms," but which sensible men, of animated faith, glory in, although they, too, call them enthusiasms. . . .

"How well I remember one evening," wrote Chastellux, [the visit had lasted four days], "as we were chatting around a bowl of Punch, after Mrs. Jefferson had retired. We came to speak of Ossian.

That word was an electric spark which passed from one to the other. We recalled and recited the passages of that sublime poetry which had most impressed us, and my travel companions, although they had not read the book, knew the English language well enough to appreciate the sentiments that thrilled us. Soon we decided to toast the book and it was placed beside the punch bowl. We were no longer aware of the passage of the hours. The Poem and the Punch occupied us far into the night."

During the winter months the French Army marked time in Williamsburg and throughout the tidewater country awaiting the development of plans for future conquest thought to be maturing in Versailles and in the West Indies. Many other men who were to play mighty parts in the world drama that was unfolding gathered in the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern, and sang and danced under the bust of Sir Walter, the Virginia pioneer who never saw the promised land save in his dreams. It is difficult to follow their footsteps on the widening scene, but it is a pious task, and we must, by the aid of the archives and the memoirs of the period, note the little that these records disclose. Naturally, but unfortunately, these records are often contradictory, and the prize puzzle with which we are confronted is the presence or the absence of M. de Barras at these historic scenes. Perhaps more than any other man who came to our aid at this critical period, M. de Barras made history. It was he who, for love of Theresia Cabarus, and perhaps for other reasons, engineered the fall of Robespierre. It was he who ushered in Thermidor, and, by so doing, quite incidentally, saved the life of Rochambeau, who was at this moment in prison awaiting execution. But did Barras take his ease in the Raleigh Tavern? Let us examine the data we have to go on and, if possible, smooth out their contradictions.

It is certain that, a few days after the departure of de Grasse, Rochambeau sent after him to the West Indies, in command of the corvette *Bonetta*, the Chevalier de Barras, described as a kinsman of the admiral of that name. To this young man he entrusted important dispatches which had come for de Grasse from Versailles and which M. de Luzerne, in Philadelphia, insisted should be placed in the admiral's hands as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, less than a hundred miles outside the Virginia Capes the *Bonetta* was overhauled and captured by two British frigates.

Who was this unfortunate bearer of dispatches? The Marquis de Noailles, a descendant of our Revolutionary friend, the vicomte, who served as French Ambassador in Washington and in Germany about fifty years ago, devoted much time and great intelligence to the study of the French participation in our Revolution. He states in his book⁹ that this unfortunate courier of the sea was the same Paul François de Barras of such prominence in the volcanic days of the Revolution—and, indeed, until Napoleon took control.

This is very high authority and should settle the question but for one thing. This Revolutionary Barras in his old age (like so many of those who had taken part in the great upheaval), dictated abundant memoirs and then turned his papers over to a literary gentleman to be edited and published in the hope that his experiences, and above all his achievements, might not pass out of the memory of his people altogether.

In these memoirs it is plainly stated that young Barras was in Brest when the fleet of de Grasse sailed, that he was on board one of the vessels of Suffren, that when the squadrons separated off the Spanish coast, one going to the West Indies, the other, in which apparently Barras sailed, to the East Indies. It is true, of course, that the memoirs only appeared long after the death of the man of Thermidor, and there is always a chance that they may have been doctored or garbled; there is also the possibility that the young sailor, as he was then, did not wish to recall his mishap with the *Bonetta*. However, the question remains one of the minor mysteries of the campaign, of which on first view at least there seems to be no convincing explanation available. This has naturally resulted in a flood of fanciful suggestion.

Among the many happy incidents of my frequent visits to Virginia in my childhood were the opportunities which it gave me to drink in the romantic stories from the lips of two of the historians of the tidewater counties, whose literary remains, unfortunately, are not so frequently consulted today as they should be. One of these gentlemen was Dr. Green of Warwick County, and of the Confederate States Navy, who bequeathed his valuable library to the university at Charlottesville. The other was Mr. Galt, for many years the head of the famous classical school for young ladies in Nor-

⁹*Marins et Soldats Français en Amérique, 1778-83*. Paris, 1903, p. 234.

folk. Both were convinced that the Barras who saved his beautiful mistress, Theresia Cabarus, from the scaffold and engineered the revolt of Thermidor was no other than the Barras who, with so many other world-shaking men, gathered in the Raleigh Tavern after the victory at Yorktown was won. Their conviction made a deep impression upon my mind at the happy stage when it is "plastic to receive and marble to retain," but I am bound to confess that in later years I found nothing in the National Archives of France to sustain their contention.

My learned informants were well aware that documentary evidence to bolster their romantic conviction was lacking, but they got around this obstacle in a way that is not ignored by other historians. "Have you noticed," Dr. Green would say, "that in none of his writings does George Washington speak of that youthful mishap which resulted in his surrender to the French at Fort Mifflin?" "And look at Napoleon," chimed in Mr. Galt. "He wrote volumes about all his military engagements, great and small, but does he say anything about his first skirmish, the occasion on which he first smelt gunpowder and had to skedaddle with the remnant of his command from the inhospitable shores of Sardinia, leaving his guns in the hands of the enemy?" There is not a line about this in his memorial or in any of his other writings. So it is clear to me that when Barras turned his papers over to the hired historian he said: "We shall leave out that little bit of bad luck with the *Bonetta*. Of course the English were in overpowering force—if I had met them on land that would have been different."

This is all very ingenious and, of course, it may be so. To me, my tidewater mentors, already referred to, are not to be dismissed lightly, so when my own researches came to a dead end and I had to leave the archives in the Soubise Palace and return to the living world, I turned the "lead" over to M. Léon Girardin, one of the most famous *foreurs* in the records of the dead world—an esteemed colleague of Lenôtre and Georges Cain. Here are some excerpts from his report which later overtook me on one of the battle fronts of the living and, alas! battling world:

"Paul de Barras, the man of Thermidor, was in Brest in March, 1781, when de Grasse sailed with the 'succors' for America. His uncle, Admiral Melchior de Barras, was in command of the port

and the home squadron. Nothing would have been easier for the admiral than to slip his young kinsman in among the scores of volunteers who sought glory and renown in the New World. True, his historian, while admitting his presence in the French naval fortress on this date, asserts that he sailed with Suffren for the East Indies, and that he was a subaltern officer in the Pondichery regiment at the time. This may or may not be correct. Historians, like other folk, make mistakes, especially when they have been subsidized, and these memoirs in many other respects do not ring true. One piece of real evidence I have unearthed, however, is quite important. It is the roster of the Pondichery regiment, with which it is claimed Paul de Barras was serving in the fall of 1781, when all those stirring events were happening in Virginia, and the name of the man who killed Robespierre does not appear upon it. He may have been absent without leave and he may have gone with the help of his uncle to America as a stowaway. Who knows?"

These were the last words of my industrious researcher, and so I leave the question to the predilection rather than the judgment of my reader. I can only claim that I have done my best for the romantic version of the tidewater historians and, as the fateful Paul who was to play such a titanic role in the history of the French Revolution, was not where his chosen chronicler says he was, he may well have been where Dr. Green and Mr. Galt were pleased to place him, certainly in excellent company.

In describing the young soldiers who gathered at the Raleigh Tavern and, ignorant of the trials and the triumphs that awaited them, sang and danced in the Apollo Room, it is difficult not to confront Berthier and Gneisenau who, in the Napoleonic Wars, were to oppose each other on many a bitterly contested battlefield.

Berthier was certainly there. His pen describes the march to Virginia and his brush depicts the camps of the hastening troops. Rochambeau frequently mentions his young aide who later became the chief of staff in Napoleon's Army, and, as Foch has said, proved absolutely indispensable to the great Corsican. Most certainly Gneisenau became the planning brain and the fighting arm of Blücher, and it was his plan of the march on Paris, enthusiastically adopted by his disabled chief, that brought low the French Eagles and helped send Napoleon into exile for the second time.

But, unfortunately, we cannot be sure that the young German was with the Anspach battalion that surrendered at Yorktown. That was indeed his regiment, hired to the British by the thrifty Margrave of Baireuth, and he certainly served in the American war. However, he may have been attached to that battalion of the regiment which General Clinton, despite the pleading of Cornwallis, selfishly retained in New York. It is certain that when, in retirement, Gneisenau in his turn dictated his memoirs, he displays a great knowledge of the American war and admits that he learned much from the tactics there first tried out, but he does not admit he was at Yorktown. Even if he was there, why should he have referred to the fact that his military career began with a capitulation? One thing is certain: whether he was an actual combatant in the trenches, or merely observed the vicissitudes of the campaign from the vantage point of Manhattan Island, Gneisenau drew from them the lessons which transformed the formal Prussian Army into the elastic force which, in the end, helped to overthrow Napoleon.

All German historians are in agreement that the young and obscure ensign of the American war planned the march on Paris in 1814, and that he and Scharnhorst, working in harmony, converted the Prussian Army into the efficient fighting machine it proved to be in what Berlin calls the War of Liberation. When Blücher was made a prince, Gneisenau was made a count and accorded an annuity. But, far from resting on these comfortable laurels, he took command at Ligny when the field marshal was disabled. The strategy of Waterloo, if there can be said to have been one, is claimed by the German historians for him. Indeed all writers are in agreement that it was his close pursuit of the French after their check at Saint Jean, where the British had sustained the brunt of the battle, that converted their defeat into a rout and so ended the Napoleonic *épopée*.

The story of Berthier is one of almost unexampled success, but, unhappily, it ends in mystery and disaster. He came back to Versailles from America with Rochambeau and was made a colonel for his services at the age of twenty-eight. His was a court family and, as chief of the National Guard in 1791, he protected the aunts of the King from mob violence and aided in their escape. It was only years later, when he became chief of staff in the army of Italy, that

he established the contacts with Napoleon which shaped his career. Their collaboration proved most happy for the Emperor and generally disastrous to his enemies. Berthier had a great capacity for detail. Practically all observers agreed that he could "co-ordinate the flashes of Napoleonic genius." He reveled in paper work and kept close watch on the services of supply which the great commander at times neglected. He assisted Napoleon in the stroke of Brumaire and soon became Minister of War in the new regime. When Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor, Berthier became his most trusted lieutenant, and in the battles of Austerlitz and Friedland he was confronted by Gneisenau, who had also enjoyed American experiences, and had profited by them. Later he was rewarded with the marshal's baton and soon became sovereign Prince of Neuchâtel.

Berthier had married a niece of the King of Bavaria, and finding soft living agreeable, so Napoleon charged, he stoutly opposed the march on Moscow; however, on the Emperor's insistence, he shared its hardships and its dangers. He did what he could to save the *Grande Armée* after Leipzig, and again he was confronted by Gneisenau in many of the battles that led to Fontainebleau.

Now we come to the final incident of the marshal's career, and one that is still hotly discussed. Soon after the Emperor was confined on the island of Elba, Berthier, sponsored by many members of his family who had always been Royalists, made his peace with King Louis XVIII. He was at his side on the occasion of his solemn entrance into Paris. Torn between two loyalties, Berthier unhappily came under suspicion in both camps.

When Napoleon escaped from his island exile, the first man he called upon to rejoin him was Berthier, his chief of staff for so many years. Bewildered, Berthier dodged an immediate decision, and left Paris for Bromberg, in Prussian Poland. Here, on June 1, 1815, he was killed, perhaps by the members of a secret society he had persecuted in former years. Others assert (and this is what I prefer to believe) that as he watched the innumerable regiments of Russians passing through Bromberg on their victorious march to Paris, he threw himself from the window of the inn where he was stopping and was picked up dead.

Marshal Foch is responsible for this summing up of the military

career of the young soldier who contributed to our victory at Yorktown:

"When on his own, Berthier was not a great soldier. He needed the inspiration of Napoleon. It should be remembered that Napoleon also needed Berthier, but I do not think the fact that Berthier was not there should be regarded as solely responsible for the Waterloo disaster. My explanation is that the Napoleon of Austerlitz was no more. His day of vigorous thinking and immediate and lightning action was past. The health of the Commander in Chief is a very important, if an often overlooked, factor in all campaigns." Foch is reported to have made this statement to his class at the French War College in 1910. He confirmed this expression of opinion in a talk I had with him during the Peace Conference in Paris, March 1919.

In that precious anthology of the Napoleonic Wars, the memoirs of Baron Marbot, there are many references to Berthier, and two of these I shall borrow. It is clear that Marbot, a colonel of hussars, was not a blind admirer of the great chief of staff. Colonels rarely are.

The first episode I shall borrow reveals Massena, generally pictured as a rough, plain-spoken survivor of the Army of the Revolution, as an adroit politician who would make any sacrifice, even the loss of an eye, rather than that his Emperor should suffer a loss of prestige. The Emperor had invited many of his marshals and many other high dignitaries to a pheasant shoot in the forest of Fontainebleau. As a pheasant rose, the Emperor fired. He missed the bird, but one of his misdirected shots hit Massena and destroyed the sight of his left eye. Only the Emperor had fired, and undoubtedly the Emperor was responsible for the unfortunate shot. Marbot tells the story in these terms: "Feeling that his eye was irretrievably lost, and that the Emperor would be eternally grateful if he acquitted him of this *maladresse*, he accused Berthier of having fired the unfortunate shot. All the bystanders agreed that Berthier was the guilty one. Napoleon appreciated the discreet purpose of the courtier Massena, and in the future he could deny Massena nothing." In silence, poor Berthier, as in many another situation, shouldered the blame and safeguarded the Emperor.

Another episode which Marbot relates is of greater military im-

portance. It deals with the premature blowing up of the Mill Bridge over the Elster, thus blocking the retreat of many divisions of the Army after the "battle of the Nations" before Leipzig had ended badly for the French. Marbot relates that a certain engineer officer in charge of the demolition squad was cashiered for negligence, but he asserts that Berthier was responsible for the premature explosion which cut off from any avenue of retreat at least twenty-five thousand men, who were either massacred or taken prisoner. "Berthier should have placed a larger force at the bridge," he asserted, "and then it could have been held until all the divisions had passed. It is he, and not poor M. de Montfort, who should bear the blame for this disaster." He insists this was the unanimous verdict of the defeated Army. Hearing that these views were generally held by officers who were in a position to know the facts, Berthier defended himself with what Marbot says was his habitual reply: "The Emperor did not give orders to that effect." Marbot then draws this picture of the relations between the Emperor and Berthier: "The Emperor had with him as chief of staff Marshal-Prince Berthier, who had been at his side since the memorable campaign of Italy in 1796. He was a capable and careful man, and devoted to the Emperor, but having suffered many times from his anger he had grown so fearful of Napoleon's *boutades* that he had decided never, under any circumstances, to take the initiative, indeed to confine himself to seeing that the orders he received from the Emperor *in writing* were carried out. This practice had a fortunate influence on the relations between the Emperor and his chief of staff but was damaging to the Army. It was impossible for the Emperor to do everything, to foresee every detail, and yet as a result of this system if he omitted or overlooked anything it was left undone."

From this it appears that Marbot, the colonel of the 23rd Chasseurs in Russia, and of the 7th Hussars at Waterloo, was not enthusiastic over the collaboration of the Emperor and his great staff officer, which so many military critics have praised in enthusiastic terms. My comment would be that a chief of staff who was never criticized by regimental and brigade officers is such a rare bird that it is fair to assume he never existed!

Young Fleury, or, as he is more formally described in the archives, André-Arsène de Rosset, Vicomte de Fleury, son of the duke of that

name, was the darling of the French expeditionary force and, indeed, a cherished visitor throughout the colonies. All the memoirs of the period, whether they flow from American or French pens, are loud in his praise. It is true that, among his other advantages over his brother officers, Fleury had the important one of being first in the field, and he was never displaced in the esteem of the colonists. At the very outbreak of the Revolution his heart was enlisted. He participated in the early struggles while the French Court still held aloof, so when Rochambeau and later de Grasse arrived he was most helpful in advising them as to conditions in a country with which they were wholly unfamiliar.

The first official reference to his services which I have come across is contained in a letter written by Luzerne, the French Minister, in September 1779, to Prince Montbarey, at the time Minister of War. It reads:

"You have, I do not doubt, been informed of the distinguished behavior of M. de Fleury at the attack upon and the capture of Stony Point. This signal victory gave the advantage of the campaign to the Americans, and it is admitted that this happy situation is due in large measure to the intelligent bravery of this officer. You know better than I the *grâces* [the favorable recognition or rewards] which his conduct demands. I can only assure you that on this and many other occasions his behavior has been truly characteristic of the French officer."

A mere list of young Fleury's *états de service* and the citations which he received would fill a volume, but they must not here be entirely ignored. Just before the battle of Germantown, in which he distinguished himself as usual, Congress presented him with a fine horse to replace the charger that was killed under him at the Brandywine Ford. He advised Colonel "Sam" Smith of the Maryland Line in the heroic defense of Fort Mifflin on Mud Island, and he directed the artillery fire from that fort which sank the *Auguste* (sixty-four) and the *Merlin* (twenty-two). On the night of October 16 when, after the heroic defense of many months the fort was evacuated, Fleury was severely wounded, and the medal that was voted him by Congress for his gallantry on this occasion can still be seen in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Fleury's services with the first French expedition to America were also appreciated, and in his official report Admiral d'Estaing writes: "I hope to serve with him again. He is a man made to unite private individuals in the same way that our Nations are united."

But while always to the front when there was fighting to be done, Fleury seems to have lagged behind on payday. M. de Luzerne, in an official report to Congress, explains how it happened that he was not placed on the list of officers entitled to back pay, sent in by General Lincoln in 1782. The French Minister wrote: "He was at that time with the troops on the Roanoke, supporting General Greene, and hoping for another fight." He asked that his name be placed on the roll by special resolution of Congress. It is to be hoped that this was done but, if it was, the record of this act of justice has escaped me.

In September 1782, in command of the ships that escaped Rodney, Admiral Vaudreuil was in Boston harbor, but he did not feel any too safe from his daring enemy. Frequently he wrote Rochambeau that he was leaving nothing undone to improve the defenses of the port, in the expectation of an attack, and on September 13 he gave definite shape to his fears. "I have much reason to expect an attack by *Les Anglais* and I have repaired the batteries which command the entrance to the harbor. M. de Choisy and the other officers of the artillery and the Engineers have decided it is necessary to construct new defenses on the Peninsular [?] of Nantucket [which at times he writes as Nantasket] and he asks for 600 more soldiers to man them, M. de Choisy thinking these additional men will suffice."

In his reply Rochambeau endeavored to reassure the admiral. He said the naval activities of the British in New York harbor "envisage an expedition to the East Indies (where Suffren is having considerable success)." When M. de Choisy joined him, Rochambeau wrote further:

"I have thought it my duty to send to you M. de Fleury, major in the Saintonge regiment, who has served out in America with the greatest distinction. He is perfectly familiar with the language and the customs of this country and he will prove very useful, as much in the command of your land troops as in improving the *bon ton* of the Boston militia." No doubt Fleury lived up to the gen-

eral's endorsement. The records show that he returned to France with the fleet and when anchor was cast in Brest harbor in June 1783, the vessels of the Caribbean campaign still afloat and seaworthy numbered seven cruisers and one frigate. Fleury was on board the *Auguste* (eighty guns) and with him was the Count de Viomesnil. The sailors who survived the sea fights were more than decimated by a fever they took on board with wood and water at Cape St. Francis, but Fleury was evidently in his usual excellent health and buoyant spirits. In 1784 he served with a regiment of dragoons in Languedoc. In the same province in 1788 he was in command of a regiment of *chasseurs à cheval*, and then, alas! the record closes, and the gay young cavalryman vanishes from the scene, not unhonored, it is true, but certainly unsung. In the archives the last reference to him reads, "*sans renseignements ultérieurs* [we have no further information]." ¹⁰

During the campaign Rochambeau seems to have changed his staff more frequently than is the usual custom. Perhaps these changes were provoked by the *bourrasques* of which many of them speak. The first on the roster is Fersen, the "beau Fersen," and he is followed by the Berthier brothers, one after the other. Then Baron Cromot du Bourg and the Count de Charlus, who for some reason speaks slightly of the Marquis du Bouchet, second aide at the time. In the archives of the Navy over which the father of Charlus, as Minister of the Marine, presided there is still preserved this ill-natured dig: "Du Bouchet, truly a fine fellow, but he has no talent except perhaps to have himself killed more gracefully than another."

A contrary opinion is expressed by Chastellux, and praise from this source is high praise indeed. Writing to Rochambeau, he dwelt on the fact that Bouchet took a gallant part in the battle of Saratoga and then added: "He speaks English with great facility. He has been in charge of the negotiations with the Americans and in this task he has acquitted himself well."

The roster discloses the names of many more of the aides who, during the campaign, followed one another in quick succession, probably because most of them preferred command of a combat unit to staff work. Count de Damas, Charles de Lameth, Closen, Mathieu Dumas, and Vauban are listed. Vauban proved a stayer, as

¹⁰Archives Hist. Guerre. Carton 47 B.

we find him on board the frigate *l'Émeraude* which carried Rochambeau back to France.

Young Vauban was a descendant of the famous Sebastian de Vauban who, toward the end of the seventeenth century, invented what was then called the science of modern fortifications, although with the march of time and the increase of gun power those of his models which are still to be seen in les Invalides look rather antediluvian. During the wars of the Spanish Succession and of the Grande Alliance, he took part in three hundred battles and directed forty sieges. Some of the towns he took had been fortified under his direction, and it was maliciously stated that he, better than anyone else, was in a position to know their weak places. Strangely enough, while famous throughout the war-racked world of his day for his fortifications, of which Dunkirk and Verdun (of late years so frequently in the news) were regarded as his masterpieces, Vauban was not in favor of stationary defenses. He plumed himself in his writings rather on his strategy for the capturing of strongholds. He believed that the attack was the only sure defense, and, had his countrymen observed his teachings, they would not have been content to camp behind the Maginot Line and await the onrush of a mobile enemy.

Claude Henri, Baron de Saint-Simon, the youngest of the three Saint-Simons who came to Virginia, was perhaps the most remarkable of the many remarkable young men who served in America with the French troops. He, at least, has not escaped history. Though he had not reached his nineteenth year he sailed with the fleet of de Grasse to the Chesapeake, under the patronage of his kinsman, the Marquis de Saint-Simon, who commanded the West Indian division. They were both descendants of the Duke de Saint-Simon, the famous chronicler of the court of Louis XIV. Claude Henri was in command of a small detachment of irregular troops that he had recruited in Martinique, and he and his men played a notable part in the siege.

At a very early age the young man had a realizing sense of the important role he was to play in the turbulent era of world history in which his lot was cast. It is related that when a mere child in his father's house he trained the servants to call him in the morning very early with the words: "Arise! M. le Baron. You have great things to do!"

In his memoirs he wrote: "I may regard myself as one of the founders of American liberty, as I fought at Yorktown." But he has even greater claims than that to American recognition. He fought in the battle off the Virginia Capes on September 5, 1781, when de Grasse sent the British fleet limping back to New York, and later he had the misfortune to be on the same ship as de Grasse in the spring of 1782, when he had his disastrous encounter with Rodney off Dominica. In this battle Saint-Simon was desperately wounded; while unconscious, and regarded as a hopeless case past saving, he was thrown overboard. As he had "important things to do," however, he fell on some floating spars and was ultimately rescued and nursed back to health.

Unusual indeed is the viewpoint of young Saint-Simon, who, though wounded in the war and advanced many steps in rank on his return home, was interested in everything but his military career. This singularity he brought out many years later when writing his memoirs: "In itself, the war did not interest me," he stated, "but its object interested me very deeply and I willingly took part in its labors. I said to myself: 'I want the end. I must therefore accept the means.'"

At the age of twenty—he was barely that—young Saint-Simon, the future apostle of a New Society, was peering into the distant future and prophesying as to the things that were to come. In this respect he was not unlike the men of the Third International who, in 1918, held that the Russian upheaval was merely a prelude to world revolution. It was indeed a farseeing youth who wrote:

"I felt that the American Revolution marked the beginning of a new political era; that this Revolution would necessarily set in motion important progressive currents in our general civilization, and that it would before long occasion great changes in the social order then existing in Europe."¹¹

When peace came he left the Army and made a considerable fortune in wild speculations in Paris, only to lose it promptly. He then went to Mexico where, like so many great adventurers from Cortez to Louis Napoleon, he became infatuated with a scheme to dig a trans-continental canal to facilitate commerce with the Pacific.

He came back to France when the Terror was rampant and, for

¹¹*Oeuvres*, 1865, pp. 11-12.

no reason apparently but the aristocratic name he bore, was thrown into prison, where he languished for nearly a year. He was saved from the guillotine, like General Rochambeau himself, by the coming of Thermidor and the fall of Robespierre. In his writings, the young man who later tried to turn the world upside down rarely refers to his ancestor, the court newsman, but he plumes himself upon being a descendant of that sturdy fighter Charlemagne, in his day something of a world maker and world breaker.

Of record at least there is only one romance in his busy life. He became enamored of Madame de Staël, and several letters survive in which he urged his suit. In one he suggests that they "unite their existences and their genius," and he insists, "a brilliant result most useful to humanity would follow." We cannot tell how this would have been, as Madame de Staël apparently did not hesitate a moment in declining the offer.

After many wanderings and hardships, in a necessitous old age in a Paris garret, and with dauntless courage, "young" Saint-Simon, young no longer, drew up the gospels of his *New Christianity*, which, through the contributions of a few friends, was published in 1825. It is held by many that in his writings are to be found suggestions of, even more, the embryo of theories which justify his followers (and there are still not a few today) in their claim that this descendant of Charlemagne and of the great court newsman, this gallant volunteer in the American campaign, is the spiritual ancestor of Comte and Fourier and the forerunner of Marx and even of Lenin.¹²

¹²A few weeks after these lines were written the writer stood in Moscow at the base of the great granite obelisk which, in the very shadow of the walls of the Kremlin, was recently unveiled in honor of those who are regarded as the prophets and the forerunners of the Russian Revolution. Of course the name of Marx leads all the rest, and after him come Engels and Lassalle. The fourth name inscribed is that of the young Saint-Simon who, by his gallantry at Yorktown, helped to found the great capitalistic state which is taboo in Moscow today. It is, however, no new thing that memorial tablets as well as politics reveal strange bedfellows. (1934.) In his volume devoted to things seen and to his more notable personal experiences (*Choses Vues*) Victor Hugo relates an incident that would indicate that in April 1834 the young Saint-Simon had come to be regarded as a firebrand by the rulers of the old society, who preferred to see their world remain static. Hugo writes: "I was passing the quarters of the National Guard while the rioting was in progress. I had a copy of the chronicles of the Duke of Saint-Simon under my arm. The guardsmen pounced upon me and despite my protests I had a narrow escape from being murdered as a Saint-Simonian."

Of the French officers none was more popular in America than Lauzun. Whatever faults he may have had he was a gallant soldier and he made a brave ending, hardly to be expected of one whose childhood and formative years were spent, as Sainte-Beuve wrote, "in the salon of Madame de Pompadour or some other court favorite." He was "a spoilt child—a Cherubin," says the cynical critic. He was that and more.

After his return to America from Versailles, where he had carried the bulletin of victory, Lauzun remained for nearly two years in command of the French troops in the colonies and only went home with the last large detachment. Later he made an essay in diplomacy and accompanied Talleyrand on a diplomatic mission to England.

On the death of his uncle he became the Duc de Biron, but he did not enjoy the title, or the estates that went with it, for long. In December 1793, charged with secretly helping the Vendéans, then in arms against the Republic, he was guillotined.

The events of these last few months of Lauzun's life, it must be admitted, are far from clear. After his venture in diplomacy, he had returned to the Army, and the Republican government gave him an independent command. He was for a time victorious in western France, but he was merciful to his prisoners, who, after all, were Frenchmen. The charge was made that he would let them slip through his fingers. This was a high crime and misdemeanor in the eyes of the revolutionary government, and, probably recognizing that nothing could save him, Lauzun never answered the charge. It would seem that he argued, "They are determined to take my head; let them take it." When the executioner came to fetch him, the dashing cavalryman was found eating oysters and drinking white wine.

"Citizen, allow me to finish," he said, and then, bethinking him of the duties of hospitality and offering a glass, "Take this wine; you must need courage in your profession."

And so it was that he who was called the brave Lauzun, the witty Lauzun, the mad Lauzun, went to his death with a smile on his face and a jest on his lips.

Unhappily, this gallant soldier is chiefly remembered today by his memoirs, which, it is significant to note, did not appear until 1822, or nearly thirty years after his execution. They contained

graphic pictures of the times in which he lived and of the scenes in which he was an important actor; and in part, at least, they are undoubtedly authentic.

His praise of America and the Americans is not fulsome, but what he says has a sincere ring. He is generally in accord with the high credit which his fellow chroniclers give to the American soldiers in the Successful Campaign. Like Ségur, Closen, Dumas, and Chastellux, he has nothing but praise for the American women, and there is not a single boast of gallant conquests. Here are related none of the adventures which so disfigure the chapters that deal with his experiences in other lands. At times it would seem as though these incidents had been interpolated by a Grub Street publisher, into whose hands the manuscript may have fallen, and who may have wished to produce a best seller in the style of Casanova. Talleyrand, who had very personal reasons for disliking the memoirs, said that they were falsified, and it is to be hoped that this is true. However, today, in any event, we should recall only the splendid services that he rendered with such gaiety of heart throughout the American campaign, and the fact that his reward, both from our people and his own, was meager indeed.

Of the veterans who told war stories at the round table in the Raleigh, doubtless "with advantages," which, as King Harry truly said, is the habit of old soldiers, none had more campaigns to draw from than had Adam Philippe, Count de Custine, who had fought with distinction in most of the battles of the Seven Years' War. In America as elsewhere he was generally known as General Mustache, and his portrait today in the Versailles gallery demonstrates that he deserved the sobriquet.

Custine returned to France with Rochambeau and, retiring from the Army, lived for a time the life of a country gentleman on his large estates. As the political pot began to boil he was drawn in and soon was denounced by many as a traitor to his privileged caste. He thought, and frankly said, that he could see no reason why the nobles and the clergy should be exempt from taxes, as had been their enviable lot for so many generations. When the German and Austrian forces invaded France, however, he rejoined the Army, and was given high command by the revolutionary government. At first he was most successful. Leading the Volunteers of the Nation, he

turned the invaders back and captured both the strong cities of Mayence and Frankfort. However, his lineage and his former associations weighed against the successful general, and he was relieved of his command and charges of treason were brought against him by one of the revolutionary committees. Taking advantage of this mistake, the Prussians, who had been in full retreat, came back and recrossed the Rhine. Be it said to his credit (so little can be), Robespierre intervened, saved the gallant officer's life, and restored him to high command.

Custine was in a difficult position. He had undoubtedly imbibed Republican ideas during his sojourn in America. He abhorred the Bourbons, and asserted he was fighting for an "orderly state." But he feared the "wild men" who were coming to the front. Unwisely he not only thought but said openly that, if they gained control, France would be lost.

Now, though restored to his command, victory did not perch upon his banners and, having failed to capture Condé after a costly siege, the "wild men" again charged him with treason. After the most perfunctory hearing of such evidence as was brought against him August 28, 1793, this gallant soldier of the American war, who had greatly distinguished himself at Yorktown, died under the guillotine, that "simple mechanism" which a celebrated humanitarian, Dr. Guillotin, of Paris, had invented, with the laudable purpose of ending the brutal and bloody scenes which so often attended executions by the ax in the hands of untrained and often drunken axmen.

In many accounts of the campaign that culminated with the surrender of Cornwallis it is stated that the great Tadeusz Kościuszko, a gallant soldier in wars for liberty in both Europe and America, was present at the siege of Yorktown and as a close adviser of Washington was of the greatest assistance to the Americans on this memorable occasion. For once even the usually accurate *Encyclopædia Britannica* falls into this error, for the distinguished Pole was not there. It is impossible, however, to overestimate his services to our cause from the day in 1776 when he presented himself in Philadelphia as one whose "heart was enlisted" and received the commission of colonel of artillery in the Continental Army whose guns at the time were almost wholly non-existent.

Our fortifications along the Delaware were built according to his drawings, and he was an able adviser to Gates throughout the Saratoga campaign. When this was successfully concluded he was placed in charge of the base camp and the fortifications at West Point where, watching General Clinton in New York, he remained with but few absences from 1778 to the end of the war.

When peace came it is pleasant to remember that Congress showed generous appreciation of his services by conferring on him the gift of \$15,000 and a grant of land along the Ohio of five hundred acres, also the privilege of American citizenship. In 1783 Kościuszko was enrolled as a founder of the Society of the Cincinnati, but, owing to his close association with Gates, his relations with Washington would seem to have been distant and rather formal. As a matter of fact the only reference to the distinguished Pole in the voluminous diaries is one dated Mount Vernon, June 2, 1798, which reads: "Mr. Law and a Polish Gentleman (Mr. Niemcewicz), the companion of General Kosciaski, came here to dinner as did Miss Lee of Greenspring, with Nelly Custis who returned today. . . ."

The Victory Ball

WHEN de Grasse left Virginia waters he returned to the West Indies and, in compliance with his agreement with the Spanish authorities, resumed his attacks on the Sugar Islands, which were still in the hands of the British. It should be noted, although it lowers our self-esteem by several pegs, that at this time these islands were regarded both in London and in Paris as infinitely more valuable than the unexplored, and apparently poverty-stricken, colonies of the mainland. In January he captured Saint Kitts, and then, with the Spaniards, prepared to make a combined attack on Jamaica. It was at this juncture, most opportunely for the preservation of the British Empire in this quarter of the globe, that Sir George Rodney, restored to health, and with ships refitted, came back across the Western Ocean. By a series of masterly maneuvers he forced de Grasse to fight under unfavorable conditions, and on April 12, 1782, the fleet that had made Yorktown possible only six months before was in part destroyed and the surviving vessels widely scattered. The gallant de Grasse himself was a prisoner in the hands of the British admiral.

If there ever had been any doubt as to the vigilance of the little cherub who sits on high and supports British sea power it should be dispelled by the circumstances surrounding this incident. While he was fighting his great fight and winning a victory of world-wide importance, the Lords of the Admiralty sitting in London had, in the plenitude of their wisdom, removed Rodney from his command. The

successor they had selected to take his place had already sailed for the West Indies.

Even at the end of April 1782 the French troops still in Virginia were in complete ignorance of the naval battle that had taken place in the Caribbean, with such disastrous results to their fleet. In fact, Rochambeau was daily expecting word from Versailles and orders from General Washington that would start active operations against the British garrisons in and around New York. When the bad news reached him, he was not in a position to bear up under the weight of further misfortune. With his war chest now absolutely empty, on June 8, 1782, he wrote to Luzerne: "If a frigate does not arrive with money, we are at our last sol." The court at Versailles may have been throwing away money, as Mirabeau and others charged, but apparently they were throwing little of it across the Atlantic.

Toward the middle of May sinister but indefinite rumors from the fleet in the Caribbean filtered in through the capes and caused great anxiety to the French general, but he rejected them as unworthy of credence. His optimism was strengthened by a dispatch that M. de la Luzerne sent him from Philadelphia, under date of May 23. It read:

"We get better news every day in regard to the campaign of M. de Grasse. It seems quite certain that he has gone to Santo Domingo after having beaten Rodney three days in succession—and he handled him very roughly." The French Minister did not state the source of his information, but Rochambeau accepted it gladly.

The first definite news of the defeat of de Grasse off Dominica came three days later (May 26). It was cushioned by misinformation, which Rochambeau sent off by special courier to General Greene in the Carolinas. He wrote: "Our Admiral has saved the Convoy and only lost one vessel. After inflicting heavy losses on Rodney, he has sailed for Santo Domingo with all his other vessels."

This comforting report was dispatched south on May 28, but ten days later a pinnace slipped in through the Virginia Capes and Rochambeau was confronted with the full details of the naval disaster. He faced it like a man, as his correspondence with Luzerne reveals.¹ He admitted that all thought of besieging New York must

¹Archives Hist. Guerre, 3736.

be abandoned. He wrote even worse things might happen; perhaps the United States would lose their recently acquired independence. He expressed fears for the safety of Yorktown, so recently taken, and also for the French artillery parked up the river at West Point. With the British in control of the seas almost anything might happen. Perhaps the big guns should be removed farther into the interior, he suggested.

On the other hand, the diplomatist Luzerne felt, or perhaps only simulated, great cheerfulness. He even suggested that this was an excellent moment to march on New York. Rochambeau disagreed emphatically. On the contrary, he said if this move were made, "M. Carleton would probably come to the Chesapeake and try to capture our remaining ships unprotected by the land forces." Rather dolefully Rochambeau added, "Such a move might be the beginning of the reconquest," and then he repeated he was at the end of his financial resources, indeed down to his last sol.

A few hours later the despondent Rochambeau was cheered by good news from Luzerne. He wrote the general that his secret agents informed him that the British were on the point of abandoning New York bag and baggage, that all the preparations had been made, "ships have been fitted out that are to take them to Jamaica." In his diary under date of June 9, Rochambeau, still in Williamsburg, wrote: "The moment I received this news I decided to march the Army North, to unite my forces with General Washington and menace that place [New York]."

But the generalissimo was no longer enthusiastic about attacking New York—his dream of the year before. He was doubtful about the arrival of the often-promised and long-delayed reinforcements—the phantom Second Division. And he asked himself "if they come, will they arrive in time to offer substantial help?" But in the belief that the Marquis de Vaudreuil with his squadron, all that still floated of the fleet of de Grasse, would reach Boston by August 1 at latest, Rochambeau broke camp at Williamsburg on July 1. He traveled North at the rate of from twelve to fourteen miles a day, or rather a night, starting the march at 2 A.M., "before dawn, and so before the excessive heat makes the march impossible." He left behind him four companies of the Saintonge regiment and three detachments of artillerymen, "to safeguard the siege guns, the King's Ships, the

American guns at York, and the French guns which are up the River at West Point." M. La Valette, left in command, was to make York his base, but should he be attacked in force, after further dismantling the works he was to evacuate the guns. West Point, on the York River, he was ordered to hold "*à toute extrémité*." At Hampton he left also a detachment of dragoons to bring him news "at great speed."

Long before this, indeed in December 1781, General Rochambeau had written to the War Minister: "The air of Virginia, wholesome in winter, is on the contrary full of fevers in summer, and as I have never failed to catch the fever in a fever-stricken country, I beg of you to authorize me, should it become necessary, to turn over the command of the Army to the ranking officer present."

Later, in the spring, Rochambeau proposed to Washington that they meet for a conference. Washington, still on the Hudson, was more than willing, and agreed to meet him halfway, in Philadelphia. There was, of course, much to be discussed, and an entirely new situation to be faced since the French Navy had now definitely lost the command of American waters. Back again in their old position of naval superiority, it was rumored that the British were planning an expedition from New York to attack the French islands in the West Indies. This could be stopped only by menacing their base on and around Manhattan Island.

There was another, and a still more urgent, motive for the northward march of his army, which Rochambeau communicated to Washington under the seal of greatest secrecy. M. de Vaudreuil, who commanded the scattered French vessels in the Caribbean waters, after the disaster to the grand fleet of de Grasse, had written that he deemed it advisable, at an early date, to make a run for Boston, there to refit a number of his vessels and obtain needed repairs and replacements that could hardly be secured in Martinique. The new commander of the fleet was confident that he could avoid the intercepting squadron that would in all probability be sent after him, but, once in Boston, he felt he would be exposed to greater dangers, and he suggested that the French Army be moved North to be within supporting distance of his proposed naval base there. After due consideration of these facts, the march North of the French Army was agreed upon.

Despite the great heat, which the French soldiers found so oppressive, the march from the Virginia peninsula was begun on June 23, 1782. Though they traveled by night and sought the shade of the forests in the daytime, they suffered a great deal. There was much sickness, and when Baltimore was reached Chastellux, who was in command of the column, advised a long halt until "the temperature is more bearable." As a matter of fact, the main body of the Army remained in camp in and around Baltimore until August 23. Rested and refreshed, they then started North through Philadelphia and Trenton, availing themselves of the camping places they had selected on the journey South. They marched in five divisions, with Chastellux in command of the advance and Count de Custine bringing up the rear, with most of the field artillery under the escort of the regiment of Saintonge.

On the hurried march South in September 1781, Closen had stayed with the troops, and so, to his great regret, had not been able to accompany Rochambeau on his hasty visit to Mount Vernon. As a recompense, the Commander in Chief now gave him a letter to Lund Washington. On his way North, he spent several days at the home that was to become our national shrine.

"The house," he wrote, "is quite vast. It is well proportioned and with handsome furniture and admirably kept up. There are two pavilions connected with it, and a number of farm buildings. Behind the pavilion on the right is an immense garden growing the most exquisite fruits of the country." He was very appreciative of Mrs. Washington's gracious courtesy. Apparently, at the same time, the Count de Custine, who commanded the vanguard of the French on the way to Yorktown, was also there, the same Custine who was to win and lose many battles on European fields and finally, during the Revolution, to lose his head under the guillotine.

It must have been quite a gay house party, as Closen describes it. Half-a-dozen French officers of the Saintonge regiment, who, on the march North, were camped at near-by Colchester, came over and joined the guests at Mount Vernon. One of them, a Captain de Bellegarde, presented to Mrs. Washington, on behalf of his chief, M. de Custine, a porcelain service² from his factory near Phalsbourg,

²A number of pieces of this service are in the possession of members of the Custis family. A large bowl from the Custine set can be seen in the National Museum in Washington.

France, with the Washington monogram surmounted by a laurel wreath. The recently widowed Mrs. Custis, Martha Washington's daughter-in-law, was present, and the young soldier, so long exiled to camps, seems to have been smitten. When the others had gone, "I stayed one day more," he wrote. "The ladies were very kind; their society was most sweet and pleasant. I was rather sad when I left." But he did not leave before cutting out a silhouette of the charming Mrs. Custis, which can be seen in the original manuscript of his journal.

While the French troops were still toiling along the dusty roads, Rochambeau with his aides and many general officers pushed on to Philadelphia, where Washington was to meet him. This event was celebrated with the first Victory Ball in our annals, although officially it was given in honor of the birth of the Dauphin³ who had come to bless the union of his royal parents after ten years of disappointment.

Fortunately, this ball, the first international event in the salad days of American society, did not pass unnoticed, nor was it merely chronicled in the curt way in which as a rule military men dismiss such trivial matters. The account, written to a lady of his acquaintance, reveals Benjamin Rush,⁴ famous as a signer of the Declaration of Independence, as chief surgeon in the Continental Army, an Abolitionist, a temperance advocate, and close friend of Franklin, in the role of a Court newsman of no mean order. Those who have read the learned doctor's account of the birthday party of the Dauphin are unanimous in regretting that he did not more frequently give free rein to his undeniable talent as a descriptive writer.

The ball took place in a dancing pavilion erected in the garden of the French legation. The pavilion was open on all sides, which seems to have been fortunate, as on the evening in question, July 15, 1782, the heat was so great that "half the ladies present were prevented from dancing."

³This long-awaited man child, acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic as the Dauphin, died in childhood. He was succeeded as heir apparent to the tottering throne by a younger brother, acclaimed by some as Louis XVII and later probably buried by a cobbler in a pauper's grave. His tragic fate and mysterious end fill many pages of the romances and memoirs of the period.

⁴Dr. Rush was very influential in having the Federal Constitution accepted by Pennsylvania; he was the naturally proud father of Richard Rush, attorney general in President Madison's Cabinet, and later long our Minister at the Court of St. James's.

All the details of the notable affair were in the capable hands of M. de la Luzerne, the active French Minister, and admittedly the Ward McAllister of the day. Writing to Washington, then on the Hudson, under date of July 8, he announced that he expected General Rochambeau to reach Philadelphia on the thirteenth or the fourteenth, and then his plan for the reunion and the ball develops, I hope for the honor of seeing you here by the 15th at farthest and felicitate myself that matters will concur to bring you here precisely at the time when I shall celebrate the birth of the Dauphin. Your presence and that of Mrs. Washington will render the festivities complete, and I hope the gentlemen who compose your family will accompany you. I do not send any written invitations to them nor to the Generals and other officers of your Army. Everyone your Excellency may bring with you will be welcome."

For the great event one thousand tickets were distributed, forty each to the governors of the states for officials, and forty to Washington for his ranking officers and the members of his staff and family."

Fortunately, Dr. Rush does not omit the indispensable preliminaries of the great event.⁵

The shops were crowded with customers. Hair dressers were retained, tilors, milliners, mantua makers, were to be seen covered with sweat and out of breath in every street. The morning of the long expected event was ushered in by a Corps of hair dressers occupying the places of the City Watchmen! Many ladies were obliged to have their heads pressed between four and six in the morning, so great was the demand and so numerous were the engagements of the Gentlemen of the Comb. The approach of the hour (7-30) was proclaimed by the rattling of all the carriages in the city. Spectators numbering 10,000 collected around the Minister's house and the Minister was not unmindful of them. He had pulled down a board fence and put up a neat *pallisado* fence before the dancing rooms on purpose to gratify them with a sight of the Company and entertainment. He intended further to have distributed two pipes of Madeira wine and Six hundred dollars in small change among them; but was dissuaded from this act of generosity by the gentlemen of the City who were afraid that it might prove the occasion of a riot or some "troublesome proceedings." So the money

⁵His account was first published in the *Philadelphia Portfolio*, Vol. IV, 1817.

that was to have been devoted to this purpose was distributed among the prisoners in the jails and the patients in the hospital.

About 8 o'clock our family, consisting of Mrs. Rush, our cousin Susan Hull, our sister Sukey, and myself, with our good neighbours Mr. and Mrs. Henry, entered the apartment provided for the Splendid Entertainment. We were received through a wide gate by the Minister and conducted by one of his family to the dancing room. The Scene now almost exceeds description. The size of the Company, which consisted of about 700 persons, the brilliancy and variety of their dresses, the Band of music which had just began to play, formed a scene which resembled enchantment. Sukey Stockton said "her mind was carried beyond and out of herself."

We entered the Room together and saw the world in miniature. Here were ladies and gentlemen of the most ancient as well as modern families. Here were lawyers, doctors and ministers of the Gospel. Here were the learned faculty of the College and among them many who knew not whether Cicero plead in Latin or in Greek or whether Horace was a Roman or a Scotchman. . . . In a word the Assembly was truly Republican. The Company was mixed it was true, but the mixture formed the harmony of the evening. Everybody seemed pleased. Pride and ill nature for a while forgot their pretensions and offices, and the whole Assembly behaved to each other as if they had been members of the same Family.

How great the revolution in the mind of an American! to rejoice in the birth of an heir to the Crown of France against which we had imbibed prejudices as ancient as the wars between France and England—above all how new the phenomenon for republicans to rejoice in the birth of a prince who must one day be the support of monarchy and slavery. The picture is agreeable, as it shows us in the clearest point of view that there are no prejudices so strong, no contradictions so palpable, but will yield to the love of Liberty.

But that was by no means all, for Dr. Rush continues his reflections: (How young, indeed, was our world in its heyday!)

The appearance and characters, as well as the employment of the Company suggested the idea of Elysium given by the ancient poets. Here were to be seen heroes and patriots in close conversation. Washington and Dickinson held several dialogues together. Dickinson and Morris frequently reclined together against the same pillar. Here were to be seen statesmen and warriors from the opposite ends of the Continent talking of the history of the war in their respective states.

Rutledge and Walton from the South here conversed with Lincoln and Duane from the East and the North. The celebrated author of "Common Sense" retired frequently from the Company to analyse his thoughts and to enjoy the repast of his own original ideas.

It was the hour of reconciliations. Former differences were forgotten or at least put aside for the moment in honor of the occasion. Men who had opposed each other, forgetting all former resentments, exchanged civilities. Miffin and Reed accosted each other with all the kindness of ancient friends. Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, and Irishmen conversed with each other like children of one father. Here were to be seen the extremes of the civilized and the Savage life. An Indian Chief in his savage habits and the Count Rochambeau in his splendid uniform, talked with each other as if they had been subjects of the same government, generals in the same army, and the partakers of the same blessings of Civilized life.

It would appear that dancing began promptly at 8:30 and that "each lady had been provided with a partner before she came." There were refreshments in profusion, and the guests were helped "to all kinds of cool and agreeable drinks with sweet cakes, fruits, and the like." Between the refreshment room and the dancing floor and under the orchestra there was "a private room where several Quaker ladies whose dress would not permit them to join the assembly were indulged with a sight of the company through a gauze curtain," and, as Dr. Rush well says, "this little attention of the Minister marks in the strongest manner his desire to oblige everybody."

Later on there were, of course, "fireworks and rockets, uncommonly beautiful, which gave universal satisfaction." Supper was laid at twelve "under three tents which formed one large canopy."

Now the Chevalier de la Luzerne appeared, "with all the splendour of the Minister and all the politeness of a gentleman." He walked along the tables and addressed himself in particular to every lady. And says the chronicler, "a decent and respectful Silence pervaded the whole Company. Intemperance did not show its head; levity composed its Countenance and even humour itself forgot for a few moments its usual haunts; and the simple jests, no less than the loud laugh were unheard at any of the tables. So universal was

the decorum and so totally suspended was every species of convivial Noise that several gentlemen remarked that the 'Company looked and behaved more as if they were worshipping than eating.' "

It would appear that an ode on the birth of the Dauphin had "been composed by Mr. Wm. Smith, son of the Reverend Doctor Smith, but from what cause I know not it did not make its appearance." Dr. Rush was frankly of the opinion that this omission was a mistake and, he added, "spoken publicly it must have formed a most delightful and rational part of the entertainment.

"About one o'clock," concludes Dr. Rush, "the Company began to disperse and our Family moved with the foremost of them. Before three o'clock the whole Company parted, every candle was extinguished and midnight enjoyed her dark and solitary reign in every part of the Minister's house and garden."

While the young people were dancing and their elders enjoyed themselves, in the sober manner that Dr. Rush has described so minutely, the French and American generals were discussing at some length what was to be the next military move. It was quite a problem and the unknown and unknowable factor, whether the British were really ready to negotiate peace or were plotting a renewal of offensive warfare, was necessarily the controlling one. After mature deliberation and much weighing of the pros and cons, after much debate which at this late date it is not necessary for us to recall, Washington and Rochambeau reached the decision to concentrate both armies on the Hudson, practically on the site where they had camped before the opening of "The Successful Campaign."

Half an hour later the handsome Fersen, with his important dispatches, rode out of the City of Brotherly Love, now entirely given over to international festivities, and in an incredibly short time he was in Baltimore. Then he rode on to Williamsburg, where Chastellux was now in command, thence across the peninsula to York, and eight leagues up the York River to West Point, where the French artillery had been parked to be out of reach of a landing party from the British fleet, once again in the entrance to the bay. Soon all the scattered detachments were moving northward toward Baltimore, where Rochambeau now awaited their coming in keen enjoyment of Maryland hospitality, drinking in the eloquent after-dinner

speeches of the Moales and the Purviances, of gallant "Sam" Smith, and other worthies, who spoke at the innumerable banquets with which he was honored at Fountain Inn.

At these patriotic feasts names were mentioned and toasts were given in praise of men and events long since forgotten. The Department of State was undoubtedly formally correct in limiting official invitations to the Yorktown Sesquicentennial and the Washington Anniversary to the French Government, with whom alone the struggling colonies were formally allied by treaty. However, it should not be entirely ignored that at the period which we are endeavoring to describe, and when the occurrences of the miraculous year were fresh in the memories of all participants, other obligations for assistance were generally recalled and frankly admitted. Immediately after our "Generous Ally, His Most Christian Majesty, the King of France," the King of Spain was toasted, and frequently enough Governor Gálvez, the Spanish viceroy in New Orleans, was cheered to the echo for his capture of Pensacola from the British, and for the expeditions which he sent up the valley of the Mississippi which proved so harassing to our enemies. Then the States General of The Netherlands were gratefully remembered for the important services they had rendered both before and after they entered the great war, which, at last, became almost universal.

Last, but by no means least, the name of Hyder Ali was cheered in these celebrations of victory, and the defeats to which he had subjected the British troops "in Madras and in Calicut" were enthusiastically, if not always correctly, recorded. It is evident that there was no one present at these patriotic gatherings who was not convinced that, had not death intervened and snatched victory from his grasp, the gallant Mohammedan leader would have carried out his threat of driving the British "into the Bay of Bengal." Indeed, Governor Livingston of New Jersey, who seems to have had some private means of securing most encouraging information from British India, on this and several other public occasions expressed the belief that this happy result had been achieved. That this rumor proved unfounded is doubtless a source of regret to the British statesmen of today, who are now confronted with the unenviable task of facing the Indian problem as it has developed in recent years.

A few days after the Victory Ball a sad event occurred which threw Philadelphia and the Allied troops into mourning. On July 24 Major Galvan, who had distinguished himself on many occasions, and particularly at the Green Spring battle on the James, blew out his brains. He had for "long paid fruitless addresses to a coquetish American lady," wrote Closen.

Galvan left a letter addressed to his friends, Colonel Livingston, Major Clarkson, and William Bingham which read: "Adieu! my dear Friends. Life has become too heavy a burden. Give my portrait to Miss Sally S. and tell her that gratitude for her friendship will be one of the last emotions that shall accompany me in death. I depart as gayly and almost as eagerly as when our friend General Wayne sent me to attack Lord Cornwallis and I hope that I may succeed better in outflanking love than I did in outflanking the English army."

In his comment on the sad event Closen revealed for the first time that, though a French officer, he was not a Frenchman. "Such Werther-like characters may also be found among the French," he wrote, "though in general this nation knows well how to indulge in love without perishing by it."

The invaluable journal and letters of M. de Closen, who should now be introduced as Ludwig, Baron von Closen, were discovered or rediscovered about 1880 in the library of a Schloss belonging to his descendants in the vicinity of Munich. The journal and letters are all written in French, and about twenty-five years ago a transcript was made, under the direction of Mr. Worthington C. Ford; it is now in the MS. Division of the Library of Congress. Closen seems to have remained in the French service for many years and, more fortunate than many of his brother officers, to have weathered all the storms of the Revolutionary period, without, however, attaining high rank. In 1811 he was *sous-préfet* of the department of the Rhine and Moselle, serving under his old friend of the American campaign, General Mathieu Dumas, who also survived the upheaval and left behind him notable memoirs. Closen died in 1830 at the age of seventy-five.

While, of course, provincial festivities did not approach in pomp or stateliness the great ball in Philadelphia, or the banquets in Baltimore, every possible honor was paid in the smaller communities

throughout the country to the arrival of the ill-fated Dauphin. In his paper⁶ of July 11 Mr. Greene gave a charming account of one of these gatherings in Maryland which I cannot forbear from quoting.

A large company of ladies and gentlemen assembled on Tuesday the 25th of June (1782), the day appointed by proclamation for the celebration in this state, in Lower Marlboro, where a handsome entertainment was provided. After dinner the following toasts were drank with respective discharges of musketry, viz.—

1. *The Dauphin: May he inherit those virtues which so eminently distinguish his illustrious father!*
2. *The Congress and the United States of America.*
3. *His Most Christian Majesty.*
4. *The Queen and royal family of France.*
5. *General Washington and the American army.*
6. *His Catholic Majesty and the friendly Powers of Europe.*
7. *General Greene.*
8. *The Chevalier de la Luzerne.*
9. *The American Ministers.*
10. *The Governor and the State of Maryland.*
11. *The armies and navies of France and Spain. Success to their continued operations!*
12. *A sound drubbing to the fleets and armies of Britain and hearty repentance to her infatuated King and ministry.*
13. *A firm establishment of the independence of America and peace, freedom and happiness to all the world.*

The entertainment was held in a pleasant grove and it concluded with a dance on the green of 13 couples of the younger ladies and gentlemen. The joy expressed on every countenance clearly showed that the company were happy in an opportunity of testifying publicly to the esteem in which they hold His Most Christian Majesty and the royal family of France, while they heartily rejoiced at an event so truly important and pleasing to a people with whom they are united by the strongest ties of honor, gratitude and affection.

At the Baltimore banquet in the Fountain Inn, the ten merchants who the year before had fitted out from their private means the troops of Lafayette, who had been marooned in Annapolis for so many weeks because they had neither food, clothing, nor even am-

⁶*Maryland Gazette.*

muniton, were given places of honor. They were all there, the Moales, the Purviances, Samuel and Robert, and the Hugh Young of that day. How pleased they must have been when the French general insisted upon the important contribution they had made to the Yorktown victory. "Had not Lafayette and his light infantry gone South," he said, "Cornwallis would have escaped from the Peninsula before we marched to Virginia with your great Washington, and de Grasse brought up his contingent from the West Indies. You gentlemen have a large share in our triumph."

According to the *Philadelphia Portfolio* (August 22, 1782) the honored guests on this occasion bore themselves very modestly. Its report of the proceedings reads (Samuel Purviance was their spokesman): "The merchants of Baltimore are too sensible of the harmony which has existed between the troops which your Excellency commands and all orders of inhabitants, not to feel anxious to make known their satisfaction before your departure. Permit us, Sir, to assure you that the only regret we experience is on the prospect of the removal of your army and our incapacity to make a proper return for its great services and the distinguished care shown to our citizens." Truly nothing could have been handsomer—the honors of the evening were fairly divided, as had been the laurels of the campaign.

Anchors Aweigh

AS THE little French Army, continuing its march northward, approached New York, greater precautions were taken. While Carleton, who had succeeded the lethargic Clinton in command of the British forces, seemed intent only upon his effort to detach the Americans from the French alliance and induce Congress to abandon our Allies by signing a separate peace, our generals, most wisely, did not care to trust him too far. The hussars of Lauzun, now under command of Count Dillon (the messenger of victory not having as yet returned from France), rode well out on the right flank of the infantry regiments, and by a succession of advanced mounted patrols shielded the infantry columns from any possible surprise attack.

Apparently these precautions were unnecessary. The march around New York was completed without incident, and the long-separated divisions of the Allied army were reunited at King's Ferry. Colonel de Ségur, the son of the French War Minister, who was now with the Army, described the reunion at some length.¹

"On October the 22d," he wrote, "the French army broke camp at Crompond and marched to King's Ferry, where it was received by the Continental troops with military honors." He remarked upon the changed appearance of the once "ragged Continentals." They were now well dressed and fully equipped for the first time, with arms and uniforms brought from France and from the stores captured at Yorktown. Ségur described how Washington, as a public testimony of his respect for the French contingent, and his gratitude

¹His memoirs.

for the benefits that had accrued from the alliance, drew up the American forces in two lines, and, as the French marched past, "as a further token of civility, caused his drums to beat French marches during the entire review." For some weeks now the two armies lay side by side, the French near Crompond, on the left of the Americans, about ten miles from Verplanck's Point, and some twenty miles from the advanced position of the British around New York.

It was, happily enough, on the first anniversary of their joint victory at Yorktown that Washington offered a dinner in the camp on the Hudson to the French officers who on this memorable day were to take their leave. While it was not generally known, the French division was under sailing orders, and the march to Boston was to begin in a few days.

Few, if any, of the French officers who were present ever saw their Commander in Chief again. Fortunately Closen was there and wrote in his diary:

"There is no sort of kindness or token of good will we did not receive from General Washington. The idea of parting with the French Army, probably forever, seemed to cause him real sorrow. From all of us he was the recipient of most convincing proofs of the respect, esteem, and veneration which every individual in our army felt for him."

Closen was evidently too deeply affected to indulge in the sprightly details with which he has so often placed us in his debt, when he came to speak of the last hour that he and the other French officers spent with Washington. "In the evening after the banquet," he wrote, "we took our leave of General Washington and the other American officers of our acquaintance as our march (to Boston) had been fixed for the 22nd. He overwhelmed us with marks of kindness and amiability. Our sorrow at parting was not less great. We knew we were separating from a man who, owing to his noble character, his military talents and his imperishable services in the cause of his country, enjoyed the veneration of his fellow citizens and the admiration of all foreign nations, and who, despite his high renown, had sacrificed none of his original simplicity of nature."

After the departure of Chastellux, Washington took pen in hand and wrote from Newburgh under date of December 14 (1782): "MY DEAR CHEVALIER: I felt too much to express anything the

day I parted from you. A sense of your public services to this country and gratitude for your private friendship quite overcame me at the moment of our separation. But I should do violence to my feelings and inclination were I to suffer you to leave the country without the warmest assurances of an affectionate regard for your person and character. I can truly say that never in my life have I parted with a man to whom my soul clave more sincerely than it did to you. Be assured that it will be one of my highest gratifications to keep up a regular intercourse with you by letter."

Touching upon a delicate matter, the Commander in Chief now expressed regret that circumstances should withdraw Chastellux "from this country before the final accomplishment of that independence and peace which the arms of our good ally have assisted in placing before us in so agreeable a point of view. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to accompany you through the continent of North America at the close of the war, in search of the natural curiosities with which it abounds, and to view the foundation of the rising empire."

The announcement of his engagement to Miss Plunkett, a charming young lady Chastellux met while taking the waters at a spa some years later, brought the following humorous epistle from Washington, which closed the correspondence, as within the year Chastellux was dead.

"I saw by the eulogium you often made on the happiness of domestic life that you had swallowed the bait and that you would as surely be taken one day or another as that you were a philosopher and a soldier. So your day has at length come. I am glad of it with all my heart and soul. It is quite good enough for you. Now you are well served, for coming to fight in favor of the American rebels all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, by catching that terrible contagion, domestic felicity, which like the small pox or plague a man can have only once in his life." On the same day the letter to Chastellux was penned Washington wrote this tribute to his able lieutenant and loyal friend, Rochambeau.

"I cannot permit you, my dear General (December 14, 1782), to leave this country without again expressing to you the high appreciation I feel for the services you have rendered America—by the

close attention you have always shown in her interests, by the order and discipline you have invariably maintained in the army corps under your command, and by your promptness on every occasion to facilitate the joint operations of the combined armies.

"In addition this testimony I give to your public character and conduct, I would not be true to the sentiments of my heart did I not express to you the happiness which has come to me through our personal friendship, the memory of which will always remain one of the most agreeable of my life.

"My best wishes will follow you to France, where I have no doubt you will receive the gracious rewards of a generous Prince and the warm greetings of your affectionate friends."²

After a few days of rest in the Westchester hills, under the tulip trees, the French division made its preparations to continue the journey to Providence along much the same road it had followed in the march South more than a year before. But one detail had been overlooked, and this omission provoked an incident which all the diarists relate, and which Rochambeau himself describes "as very characteristic of republican liberty." It developed later that the evening before the morning scheduled for breaking camp a local constable, who was also a captain of militia, had presented a bill demanding fifteen thousand francs in payment of the wood the Soissonais brigade had fed to its campfires. "While I found the bill exaggerated," wrote Rochambeau, "I sent the man to the Commissary Villemazy, whose duty it was to attend to such matters and who had been instructed to pay cash for everything consumed there before we left for the march northward."³

On the following morning the *générale* was beaten, and Rochambeau, Ségur, and others among the ranking officers took up their position at the head of the column, as it was their custom always to lead the way for a few hundred yards on foot. "Suddenly," wrote the general, "a man approached me and addressed me in the most respectful manner. He said he was perfectly familiar with the services I had rendered his country, that he respected me, but that he had a duty to perform. With that he produced a paper and placing his hand gently on my shoulder he said, 'You are my prisoner.'

²Archives Hist. Guerre, 3735.

³Rochambeau. Memoirs.

"'All right,' I answered laughingly, 'take me away with you to a dungeon—if you can.'

"'No, Monsieur,' he answered. 'Not that—but having done my duty I beg you to permit me to withdraw—unmolested.'

"I continued my march at the head of the column," concludes the general, "but I ordered Villemazy to go to the house of this officer and settle the matter in a just manner. This he did, but on arrival at the constable's house he found the poor man surrounded by his neighbours who were covering him with reproaches, for his behavior. The bill, reduced to two thousand francs, was paid, but all accounts agree that public opinion was strongly against the wood merchant, and by order of the Justice he was compelled to pay the expenses of the proceedings."⁴

The French officers went on their way, wondering not a little at how quickly the civil authority had reasserted supremacy over the military, but they seem to have taken the lesson in good part and no hard feeling lingered. Indeed, a few days later M. Blanchard, now the commissary general, stopped in this village and made this entry in his diary: "I lodged at Salem in the house of the constable who arrested M. de Rochambeau. I did not know it then; he received me very well."

Soon the march across Connecticut, with its wealth of gorgeous autumnal foliage, was concluded, and the officers and men of the marching regiments were back in the familiar camps of Rhode Island. Old friends were greeted and new friends were made; while the weather was extremely cold it was evidently very exhilarating.

Of the gaiety in Providence and Newport at this period M. de Broglie wrote:⁵

"M. de Rochambeau, much vexed with the perpetual delays of the fleet, nevertheless behaved at Providence like a thoroughly good French General; that is to say, in order to divert the army and gratify the ladies of the city, he gave some balls in a handsome and large public apartment intended for such purposes. It was at the first of these balls that I saw for the first time the Misses Bowen, sisters of the Governor of the city. I do not give their portraits here

⁴Rochambeau. *Memoirs*.

⁵*Memoirs*.

because I do not want to turn all the men crazy and render all the women jealous."

Closen sent home a more detailed account of the departure from Providence. Under date of December 1 he wrote: "The Bourbonnais left today, the Soissonais leave tomorrow, Saintonge on the 3rd, and the Royal Deux-Ponts on the 4th. Fortunately my good friend Alexandre Lameth, who will remain attached to the corps of M. le Duc de Lauzun, has bought all my horses and saddles and bridles at the price I paid for them as they were in good condition, which fills my purse with louis with which to return to France. The last days spent in Providence could not have been more depressing and gloomy for me. The departure of M. de Rochambeau and my other friends caused me real sorrow."

M. de Ségur, in a letter to his wife in France, gave the following details as to the next stage of the winter march to Boston:

"The severe cold that prevailed caused much suffering. I was moreover obliged to keep a strict watch night and day over our men. . . . The prospect of liberty, presented everywhere in this country to our soldiers, had developed in many of them a desire to desert the colors and remain in America. In several detachments the number of desertions was important; thanks however to our un-failing vigilance and good fortune the regiment of Soissonais lost but few men."⁶

M. de Ségur who, with Broglie, Vauban, and the other officers had given a farewell ball in Newport a few days before, drew the following picture of his experiences at this the closing period of his sojourn in America:

"Our army was now encamped on the road three miles from Boston. The cold was sharp and the snow fell in abundance. As we were not yet certain as to the time of our departure M. de Rochambeau caused barracks to be built for the soldiers and allowed colonels to lodge in private houses where everyone eagerly offered us an asylum. This permission afforded me the agreeable opportunity of observing more in detail the interior of an American family and their mode of living. I was delighted with the simplicity and frank cordiality of my hosts and with the purity of their morals. Their politeness was the more pleasing, as it was entirely free from ceremoniousness; they

were at the same time well informed, and devoid of all affectation; everything in them was natural; and their pleasures appeared to consist in the discharge of their duties. With them was good sense, and reason dictated their language and presided over their actions. In short, it really must be admitted, that truth and happiness, so far from being totally banished from the earth, as certain morose philosophers pretend, are everywhere to be met with in America.”

It is more than probable that during the conference in Philadelphia Rochambeau told Washington that, in his judgment, the bulk of the French troops in America would shortly be sent elsewhere. It is certain that when, many weeks later, the two armies camped side by side on the Hudson, the advisability and the timeliness of this step were frequently discussed by the two generals.

Rochambeau was undoubtedly of the opinion (especially after his unmolested march around New York) that the British forces in America would now remain on the defensive. In these circumstances it was most natural that the French Government should be desirous of concentrating all available troops on that front of the world war where their national interests were still in jeopardy. This, of course, was in the West Indies, where, since the disaster to the fleet of de Grasse, the rich French islands lay open to attack.

In view of the military considerations involved these matters naturally were not discussed publicly, and the general public was for many weeks under the impression that the march of the French troops to Boston was made simply with the purpose of defending the harbor, where the scattered vessels of the French squadron were refitting. But at least the generalissimo was advised. In his letter to Chastellux, written two weeks before the fleet and the transports left, Washington expressed regret that he “should be withdrawn from this country before the final accomplishment of that independence and peace which the arms of our good ally have assisted in placing before us in so agreeable a point of view.”

Of course this letter was most confidential, as was the official communication of the French Minister in Philadelphia, in which he informed the Congress, through the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that the Army was embarking (destination for obvious reasons omitted) and also advising them “Of His Majesty’s intention to

direct the return of the Army whenever an object should offer in which they might effectively co-operate with the troops of the United States." This communication was later accorded a vote of thanks by the Congress, and a resolution was sent to Paris which assured the King and the French people "that the troops who had rendered such signal services would ever be held in affectionate remembrance."

While often desirable, it is extremely difficult to make even the preliminary arrangements for the transfer of an army corps across the seas without giving some inkling of what is in the wind, so it is not surprising that long before Boston was reached, and the awaiting transports came into view, the tongues of many of the younger officers were wagging. Many and most diversified were the plans for the coming campaign that were drawn up and discussed at the mess tables. Some of this gossip M. de Closen confided to his diary. "Many in the army are of the opinion that M. de Rochambeau has made a mistake in urging our departure so soon without positive orders. It was useless to argue with these gentlemen who for personal reasons preferred to remain in America. . . . I could not convince them that M. de Rochambeau would never have assumed the personal responsibility of ordering the French army to leave the Continent and go to the Islands without special orders from the Court of France."

In this entry the young officer revealed that he, at least, was correctly informed as to the destination of the armada, but the great concourse of people who came out to the Neck on Christmas Eve, 1782, to cheer the departure of our gallant Allies were still in the dark.

It took much longer than had been anticipated to refit the squadron of M. de Vaudreuil and to convert the available ships into army transports. M. de Ségur, while impatient to return to France, availed himself of this opportunity further to explore Boston society, and his comments, especially with regard to the fair sex, are not without interest. His considered opinions were as follows:

"The ladies are attired *avec recherche* but not with taste. As yet they do not know how to dress their hair. They dance rather badly although they are very fond of this exercise. Some of them are quite musical and play agreeably on a number of instruments. Their man-

ner of singing is a little monotonous; it is a *mélange* of the English and the Italian manner and it is sweet when the voice is *jolie*.

"Among them all the prettiest without doubt is Mme. Smith, wife of a very rich merchant. She presides over one of the most agreeable houses in Boston. She gives excellent dinners, likes to have homage paid to her, and she particularly likes the French to pay her these honors because while not so beautiful she does resemble the Queen of France. And there is Mme. Tudor, the wife of a lawyer, aimable and speaking French quite well. She could not lack admirers, and indeed she has a number among the most distinguished of the French officers. Mme. Tudor is the author of a kind of *placet* addressed to the Queen and M. de Chastellux will carry it to France. It is indeed very charmingly written and the conception of it is happy."

And now M. de Noailles sent last words and a parting gift to his Newport friends. "You may recollect," he wrote, "we spoke sometime of my family; in the number of whom you mentioned a great curiosity to know my wife. In our correspondence I entertained her of the *plaisir* and happiness I had in your society; as she is a better wife than I am a husband, she desired to show her gratitude to Mrs. Robinson, wrote the enclosed letter, and sends me cups which she wishes you will receive to preserve the remembrance of her. The cups are running in the country, if I can ever find them I shall be happy to see you in possession of it."

From Boston, on the eve of the departure of the fleet, he wrote: "The French fleet is ready to sail and my arrival will hasten my departure of a few days. Don't forget, Miss Molly, that I wish often to hear from you and that I should look as an injury to friendship if you should not permit me to assure you of my most sincere and respectful attachment. My best compliments to all your family. I send you the cups of Mme. de Noailles. I cannot think you will drink our health in but I will hope that great many people who make ardent wishes don't desire ourselves so happy as you do."

From Paris in the following April he sent good news. "Think with pleasure that peace will soon take place and that you will be left free and happy. The new ministry in England is as much American as the Congress itself. I expect with very great impatience that

I may go to America and see all your family again. My wife wants to be remembered to you. She often talks of going to America. I cannot express how attached I am to that part of the world called America. I think more of the house built in Water Street, where I was so long and so short a time, than the whole continent."

After the tragic death of his wife on the scaffold (1793) Noailles returned to America and purchased a large tract of land on the banks of the Susquehanna, not as a speculation, but for the purpose of offering an "asylum," as he called it, to the scattered and proscribed nobles of France. When this venture failed, he turned his thoughts to what he apparently preferred to any other pursuit—fighting Englishmen. He returned to the "islands," and by some fluke of political fortune was given the command of the French troops in Santo Domingo. For months he put up a magnificent resistance in Mole St. Nicholas to the overwhelming forces of the British and their black allies. When the situation on the island became hopeless he escaped, with those of his men who survived, on board a little corvette. He was approaching the Cuban coast when he had the misfortune to run in with a heavily armed British frigate.

The French vessel had only an insignificant armament, but Noailles took a desperate chance, ran her alongside his powerful antagonist, and boarded her. He was soon in full possession, but, unfortunately, in the struggle he received a serious wound and six days later, on January 5, 1804, a few hours after reaching Havana, he died. As Rochambeau wrote in his memoirs: "He was mourned by his soldiers and the Spaniards alike."

His heart was enclosed in a silver jewel box by his faithful grenadiers, which they attached to their regimental standard. They carried it with them in battle, and, when peace came, the survivors of the campaign brought it back with them to France and turned it over to his sorrowing family. For many years his body remained interred in Havana, but after the Spanish War of 1898 it was taken to France. The heart and the dust of this distinguished soldier of the American Revolution are now reunited in the family vault of the Noailles in Corrèze. His parting gift, the Sèvres cups, for all their "running in the country," reached their destination not only unbroken but unchipped. They are today the appreciated possession of a descendant of the charming Miss Molly in Philadelphia, and

out of them, in 1918, many a young American soldier of the Pennsylvania division drank his stirrup cup before sailing for France.

The French infantry division and the men of the field artillery who had also reached the Northern port spent about three weeks in and around Boston. They were honored with a banquet by "Gouverneur John Hancock and Council," and many less formal and probably more enjoyable parties were given in their honor. On December 23 the refitted vessels were declared ready to put to sea, and the troops went on board. On the morning of the twenty-fourth the fleet sailed out of the harbor, the frigate *Triomphant*, with dramatic effect, leading the way.

The channel was narrow and not very deep, and the heavily laden French ships rode low in the water. One of them, the *Warwick*, struck and was lost. Fortunately she carried no troops and the crew was saved. Outside, the fleet ran into heavy weather, and it was very uncomfortable to the land troops packed on board. According to Blanchard, "the rolling was so great during the first days we were obliged to eat on the floor."

Rochambeau had bidden a soldierly farewell to the bulk of his troops, and, following the advice of his naval advisers, had gone South to embark for France. Before leaving he had placed in command General Viomesnil, the loyal officer, faithful to death, who ten years later received a mortal wound in his unsuccessful attempt to defend the Tuileries against the invading mob. The pitching and tossing of the ships for several weeks now were so great that M. Blanchard couldn't write, and the usual entries in his journal are omitted, but when he got his sea legs, he paid a fine parting tribute to his general, M. de Rochambeau, whom he was never to see again. It is a very human picture that he drew: "He had his faults. He was suspicious, not very accommodating, and far from good tempered, but he was of the greatest service to us in America. His officers complained at times, but in the end they all conceded he was a fine figure of the old army. It is certain that he gave to the Americans an excellent impression of our people. They had expected a *petit maître Français* and in him they beheld a man who was steady and thoughtful."

Blanchard dwelt with approval upon the fact that "his General was very moderate in his potations" and that he only responded

gingerly to the "innumerable toasts he was called upon to honor." To clinch the matter, he told how on one occasion, at a banquet, a surprised American, seeing how sparingly the general drank, turned to him and said: "Your General is sobrious," which would also seem to indicate that M. Blanchard now eschewed Latin and rather fancied his English.

A few days later, when Rochambeau and the officers of his brilliant staff rode into the little town of Anne Arundel (Annapolis) in Maryland, for the last time editorial reserve, as far as the *Gazette* was concerned, was thrown to the winds. The close-mouthed behavior, hitherto observed by Editor Greene, was doubtless more than flesh and blood could maintain under the circumstances. The French visitors were greeted with fireworks and artillery salvos. They were showered with honors of every description, and Editor Greene, who was ardently Francophile, chronicled them one and all. He printed in full the resolution of the General Assembly, thanking Governor Lee officially for his "polite treatment of the officers of His Most Christian Majesty." In extending this hospitality, Governor Lee was assured that he "had done honor to the State of Maryland."

Putting two and two together, it would not have been difficult for a British spy to gather that Rochambeau was in town and on the eve of embarking for France. It is more than probable that the news reached New York by underground methods and that intercepting frigates were sent to the Virginia Capes—but we must not anticipate. Be this as it may, in his issue of January 9, 1783, Mr. Greene cast discretion to the winds and printed the great news.

"On Sunday evening last," he wrote, "His Excellency, Count Rochambeau, with Suite, arrived in this city from the Eastward and yesterday morning embarked on board His Most Christian Majesty's frigate, *l'Emeraude*, for France." Then follow these eloquent words of farewell and salutation: "As long as Liberty shall be considered of value, this event must perpetuate our gratitude, while it unites your fame with that of General Washington." In the formal ceremony of leave-taking, the President of the Maryland Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates joined in saying, "We pray that the laurels gathered at York may never fade." The reply of Rochambeau was also handsome and greatly pleased the Mary-

landers. "By you," he said, "the French troops have been ever received with friendly cordiality and a hospitality that could only have been bestowed upon allies who were both beloved and esteemed."

With Count Rochambeau on board the small frigate *l'Emeraude* that slipped out of Annapolis on the eighth of January (1783) were seventeen officers of high rank, including his son, the viscount, the Chevalier de Chastellux, Choisy, Vauban, and Montesquieu. Inside the capes they were informed that British vessels, probably sent to intercept them, had been seen from the lookout post at Cape Henry. Rochambeau was impatient of further delay, however, and at nightfall on the evening of the fourteenth, with a fresh north-west wind behind him, he ordered all sail clapped on.

In less than an hour the Frenchman was sighted by a British frigate, evidently a very powerful vessel and also a fast sailer. The strong wind blew away the low-lying clouds, upon whose protection the Frenchmen had relied, and a most unwelcome moon lit up the sea until all objects were as clear as in daylight. Twice in the course of the night the pursuer drew within range of the fugitive frigate and fired her bow chasers, but without great effect. In their desperate plight a council of war was held and the French naval captain told Rochambeau that there was not the remotest chance of a successful resistance, that the Englishman was much too powerful, and the only hope was in continued flight. To facilitate this everything that was removable went overboard—all the extra spars and all the smaller guns; so lightened, the fugitive vessel with her distinguished passengers gained in speed, and when morning came the pursuer was lost to view.

In his narrative Rochambeau related how they were followed all the way across the ocean, and right up to the entrance of the Nantes River, by gales and capricious weather. It was fortunate that the spars in service held, as all replacements had gone overboard. All hands were delighted when the frigate anchored off St. Nazaire on the morning of February 10. On landing the distinguished officers learned that the treaty had been signed and peace had come. From the first Vergennes had said that peace would be the result of the Yorktown victory, and now he was justified before all men.

Chastellux came very near succeeding to the command of the

French forces when Rochambeau left for France. It must have been a deep disappointment to him that the plan was not realized. However, as the papers of the generalissimo of the French contingent disclosed, it gave him an opportunity to express to the War Minister in Paris his approval of the man of letters who had commanded a brigade throughout the campaign. Rochambeau wrote: "I leave to Baron Viomesnil the command of the Army. If he has not returned before I sail, I will presume he is not returning to America. In this case I shall place the Chevalier de Chastellux in command for the duration of my absence. I should tell you that this officer is very sympathetic and agreeable to General Washington and the Americans. He knows their politics and their manners. He is also on excellent terms with M. de Luzerne, and I shall not be anxious as to how he will get along with the one or the other." However, the baron turned up off the Virginia Capes in July 1782 and took over the command, and the chevalier had to content himself with the very handsome terms of this citation.

The officers and men of the French Expeditionary Force to America in 1780, as far, at least, as American history is concerned, now vanished into thin air. But on the blood-spattered boards of the revolutionary stage in Europe, upon which the curtain was so soon to rise, they appear again, and in many tragic roles. Let us try to follow them.

Sad to relate, in the turmoil of revolutionary Paris, in a society in convulsions, our French musketeers, who in America fought shoulder to shoulder, are often found in opposing camps. This is particularly noticeable in the thrilling episode of the flight from Paris of the royal family, which Fersen, the devoted friend of the Queen, and the young Count de Damas, planned and carried out while their former friends, Lafayette and Dumas, who had been placed practically in command of the Republican army, obeyed the decrees of the National Assembly, and helped to bring the fugitives back to their none-too-gilded cage.

In the drama of Varennes (upon this point at least all French historians are in agreement) Fersen, the "beau Fersen," was the moving spirit. He devised the strategy of it. He brought the fugitives out of Paris June 20, 1791, and when this was accomplished went ahead to prepare beyond the frontier a reception worthy of royalty, only

when, as he thought, all but one danger had been surmounted. That was that the fugitives might be recognized because he was with them and because, though misrepresented, his devotion to the Queen was well known.

Young Count de Damas, not so young as when he charged the British trenches at Yorktown, was present in Varennes when the flight was intercepted, and did what he could to save the fugitives. When he failed, when his troop of horse refused obedience and joined with the villagers and the excited peasants from the surrounding country in their shouts of "Vive la Revolution, Vive la Nation!" he sought by his presence to shield the royal captives from indignity and insult on the sad return journey to Paris. With this purpose he took up his post at the right hand of the great coach that had been turned around in the direction of the capital. But the excited mob dragged him from his horse, trampled him underfoot, and left him for dead in the middle of the road.

Fersen never married and he never forgot the Queen, to whom he had been devoted for so many years; and above all he never forgave her executioners. He never believed in the valor of the armies of the Republic, and even in 1798, when he read of the French successes that revolutionized warfare, he wrote in his diary: "Oh, for *armies* to crush these vermin!"

The tragic death of the handsome Swede, in 1810, has been generally regarded merely as a bloody incident in the civil war that went on for so many years in Sweden between the "Hats" or feudal party, and the "Caps," who were radical and revolutionary. Recent investigators, however, have put a somewhat different aspect on the tragedy. When the remains of the prince royal, who had died suddenly and under somewhat mysterious circumstances, were brought to Stockholm, Fersen, as grand marshal of the Court, went to meet them in his gilded carriage. The "Caps" were greatly excited and exasperated by the false charge so widely circulated that Fersen had poisoned the prince. The grand marshal was dragged from his coach by the mob and in the great square in front of the palace was torn limb from limb. An hour or two later, what remained of the "beau" Fersen was picked up out of the gutter by some soldiers, packed in a horse blanket, and carried away.

Not the least notable of our French friends was the Marquis de la

Rouerie, who came to America several weeks before Lafayette, and fought throughout the Revolution under the war name of "Colonel Armand." He recruited the Armand legion, largely at his own expense, and was distinguished for his gallantry both at Savannah and at Yorktown. Being of a somewhat quarrelsome disposition, he fought several duels, fortunately bloodless, with American officers. On one occasion he requested Washington to act as his second in one of these encounters. He went back to France "untainted by democracy," and later was given the command of the Whites in the Vendean revolution by the Bourbon princes in Coblenz. He died in his camp of a stroke, on learning that his beloved King Louis XVI had been executed.

Even a glance at the letters^a that were exchanged after the war between Washington and Rochambeau and their companions in arms (for anything like a comprehensive survey would lead us too far afield) cannot fail to be interesting, or to shed light on the subsequent developments in their respective countries. It is evident that many French officers who served on the American front in the world war against England returned to their homes with very different ideas of what government should be to those held by the majority of their countrymen who had stayed at home. Some of them, at least, set to work to evangelize, to "leaven the masses." They had helped to solve a problem across the Atlantic, but at home many thought their activities served only to complicate a situation that was difficult enough without their participation.

This attitude of the younger officers who came across the seas to our assistance, and the state of mind in which they returned, was made quite plain by one of their number, M. de Ségur, when years later in writing his memoirs he looked back upon and described episodes of the turbulent era of which he was then one of the few survivors.

"We were all dreaming of Liberty," he wrote. "No one thought of a revolution in France. We all wanted to fly to America in the name of philanthropy, and we were destined to bring home the germs of an ardent passion for emancipation and independence."

When Talleyrand in his turn came to write his memoirs, he said:

^aWashington-Rochambeau Correspondence, Archives, Hist. Guerre. Carton 3735.

"The young French nobility, enrolled for the cause of independence (in America), attached itself afterwards to the principles it had fought for." True enough, but there were exceptions. Notable among these was M. Pontgibaud, who came out to America early in the war, served under Lafayette with distinction, and, as the Revolution at home developed, became more and more reactionary.

In his memoirs⁹ Pontgibaud gave this explanation of what occurred, which he found so regrettable:

"The officers of Count de Rochambeau [after Yorktown] had nothing better to do than to travel about and visit the country. When one recalls the false ideas of government and philanthropy, with the virus of which these young men were infected in America, and which with such lamentable success they propagated in France, and when one recalls that mania for imitation, which without being its only cause, certainly powerfully aided the Revolution [French], people should then agree that all those red-heeled philosophers, for their own sake and ours, had much better have remained at home at court. Each of them thought he would be called upon to play the part of Washington."

The chevalier never changed his views and, when the Revolution triumphed, he went abroad and joined the *émigrés*. When asked to support Lafayette and "his former brothers in arms of beyond the sea," he answered with a decided negative; and when an old man and dying in the firm belief that the monarchy had been re-established in France forever, he wrote: "It has been justly said that in a revolution the difficulty lies, not in doing one's duty but in knowing where it is. I did mine because I knew where it was." Certainly, without the least hesitation, Pontgibaud joined the princes and lived in exile for many years.

While the Count de More was evidently not one of those who on his return home thought that the French electorate was prepared to exercise the rights and to perform the duties which our colonists had acquired in the course of generations, he had, as Lenôtre points out in his history of *La Révolution par ceux qui l'ont vue*, learned the value of self-help so lacking in many of his noble contemporaries. When his estates were confiscated and the pensions which his forebears had enjoyed for generations were canceled by the *sans-culottes*,

⁹Memoirs of Chevalier de Pontgibaud, Count de More. Paris, 1827.

he left France, but he was not content to live upon the meager bounty of the kings and pretenders in exile, nor did he give dancing lessons in Piedmont or subsist by seasoning salads in London as did the famous M. de Champcenetz. No. The Count de More struck out for himself. As a pedlar with a pack he walked through Bavaria and Austria selling stockings and kerchiefs to the peasants. In this pursuit he was so successful that in a couple of years he was able to establish a shop in Trieste, where his business became so flourishing that he opened a bank, and before the Restoration restored him to his estates and his native land he had become, as Lenôtre affirms, "one of the most opulent capitalists in Europe." It is quite plain that this gallant soldier of Rochambeau had kept his eyes wide open while fighting for freedom in America and had learned to fend for himself in most adverse conditions.

Washington was an intelligent and sympathetic observer of the political developments in France. He followed them as closely as the intervening distance and the slow communications permitted. Often answers to requests for information and advice, and even guidance, were delayed many months. Indeed in one of his letters to Rochambeau Washington regretted the "numerous avocations which leave me no leisure for the agreeable duties of friendship." But when he did write he never failed to emphasize the pleasure which the correspondence afforded him.

To my mind one of the most charming of the letters exchanged between these loyal friends, separated by the wide expanse of the Western Ocean, is the one in which Rochambeau told Washington of his meeting with their old antagonist. "I have seen Cornwallis last summer in Calais. I gave him a supper in little committee (*en petit comité*). He was very polite but, as you can believe, I could not drink with him your health in toast." The sturdy Frenchman, although he had held many important posts since his return from America, and also spent not a few anxious months in prison, because he was suspected of a decided leaning toward the ancient regime, lost no opportunity to demonstrate his knowledge of English. To this determination we are indebted for the remarkable letter¹⁰ he wrote Washington from his seat near Vendôme on April 11 (1790).

¹⁰Washington-Rochambeau Correspondence. Archives Nat. Paris Hist. Guerre. Carton 3735.

He agreed with Washington that you can reach safe and sure decisions in politics only by deep thought and careful study and then recalled this illuminating incident: "Do you remember, my dear General, of the first repast we made together at Rod Island? I made you remark from the Soup the difference of character of our two Nations, the French burning their throats and all the Americans waiting wisely the time it was cooled! I believe, my dear General, you have seen since a year that our Nation has not changed of character. We go very fast. God will that we reach our aim."¹¹

Warned by many observers of the dangers ahead, Washington watched with keen interest and solicitude the boiling over of the political cauldron in Paris, in which the future of the sister nation and the fortunes of so many of his gallant comrades in arms were involved. He expressed his anxiety in many letters to Gouverneur Morris, the drafter of the Constitution, American Minister accredited to the Convention. On October 20, 1792, he wrote to Morris: "We can only repeat the sincere wish that much happiness may arise to the French Nation and to mankind in general out of the severe evils which are inseparable from so important a revolution."

The final scene of this eventful history discloses Washington at headquarters on the Hudson. The charming M. de Ségur, a frequent and welcome visitor during the previous year, had gone to Russia on a mission entrusted to him by the French King. He carried with him the manuscript of a historical drama which he wrote during the long winter evenings in America, and the Empress Catherine had ordered that it be produced in her Imperial Theatre of the Hermitage. It was based on the story of the great Roman, Cincinnatus, but those who had been privileged to read it saw that many things had been suggested by the American experiences of the author. Barlow¹² and others were of the opinion that Washington himself had been closely studied for the title role. Many of these believed that, as it had happened with the illustrious Roman, the people would come again to

¹¹Rochambeau Correspondence, Library of Congress.

¹²Joel Barlow, aide to Washington, was the poet member of the "Family." He belonged to a literary coterie known as the "Hartford wits." Sent to France on a diplomatic mission in 1812, he was summoned by Napoleon to meet him in Poland. He became involved in the retreat of the Grande Armée from Moscow and died of exposure on Christmas Eve of that year.

Washington and ask for leadership in peace as they had in war. The lonely figure on the Hudson, yearning for his home acres on the Potomac, hoped not.

Most of the French detachments had left America, and those that remained in Baltimore and on the Delaware were packing up to go. Hundreds of the brave soldiers and sailors who had served so valiantly in the Virginia campaign had fallen in the great naval battle with Rodney, or had been lost at sea when the *Duc de Bourgogne* and other French vessels were wrecked on the Venezuelan coast. Their services have been, as a general thing, forgotten, but the people who have been given their independence certainly made no invidious distinction against the foreigners.

On the very campus of St. John's College in Annapolis, under the great trees that have survived from those epic days, on the historic spot where the Light Infantry of Lafayette received the equipment from the patriotic merchants of Baltimore that enabled them to play their gallant part in the Yorktown campaign, there now arises a noble memorial in marble dedicated to the "soldiers and sailors of France who gave their lives to preserve American Liberty."

The memory of what they had done, French and Americans alike, was living and vibrant in the noble, faithful heart of the Commander in Chief. Alone, or almost so, on February 6, 1783, as the Hudson, no longer vexed by British sloops of war, flowed by his humble quarters, he celebrated the anniversary of the French alliance more fervently indeed than he did in the time of greatest need. In camp there was a review of the troops and a *feu de joie*, and then the generous order was issued, which reads:

"The Commander in Chief, who desires, on the return of this auspicious day, to diffuse the feelings of gratitude and pleasure as widely as possible, is pleased to grant a full and free pardon to all military prisoners now in confinement."

The Orderly Book, which fortunately is still in existence,¹⁸ and is one of the nation's greatest treasures, reveals that the parole he gave to his troops for the great anniversary day was "America and France," and that the countersign was "United—Forever." No! He had not forgotten.

I now close this narrative of the Successful Campaign with the

¹⁸In the MS. Division, Library of Congress.

words I chose as my text in the opening chapter. Back home at last, at Mount Vernon after the years of turmoil and of absence, Washington took pen in hand and wrote to Rochambeau, his great lieutenant, under the memorable date of February 1, 1784, these lines which epitomize the struggle from which the United States emerged triumphant:

"We have been contemporaries and fellow laborers in the cause of liberty, and we have lived together as brothers should in harmonious friendship.

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

Appendix A

WHEN the news of the preliminary peace had reached him, Washington wrote from the Headquarters of the Army March 29, 1783, to M. de la Luzerne, the Minister of France, in the following terms:

It has filled my mind with inexpressible satisfaction; and permit me to add that the joy I feel on this great event is doubly enhanced by the very obliging manner in which you have been pleased to express your congratulations to me and the army on this happy occasion.

The part your Excellency has acted in the Cause of America and the great and benevolent share you have taken in the establishment of her independence are deeply impressed on my mind, and will not be effaced from my remembrance, or that of the citizens of America, but with the latest effects of time. . . . The articles of a general treaty do not appear so favorable to France in point of territorial acquisitions as they do to the other powers; but the magnanimous and disinterested scale of action, which that great nation has exhibited to the world during this war, and at the conclusion of peace, will insure to the King and Nation that reputation which will be of more consequence to them than every other consideration. . . .

I have the honor to be

GEORGE WASHINGTON.¹

That these sentiments were not personal to Washington, that at the time they were shared by the representatives of the people of America in Congress assembled, is clearly indicated by the following letter:

THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, TO THEIR GREAT, FAITHFUL AND BELOVED FRIEND AND ALLY, LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH, KING OF FRANCE & NAVARRE.

Great, Faithful and Beloved Friend and Ally.

Your Majesty's letter of the 13th of August last has been received by the United States in Congress assembled, with a degree of Satisfaction and Pleas-

¹Sparks, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, Vol. II, p. 166.

ure which those only can conceive, who to the highest sentiments of respect, unite feelings of the most affectionate friendship.

The portraits of your Majesty and Your Royal Consort, having arrived at Philadelphia have been carefully preserved by your faithful minister, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, whose attention on this, as on all other occasions, merits the acknowledgements of Congress.

These lively representations of our august and most beloved friends will be placed in our Council Chamber; and can never fail of exciting in the mind of every American, an admiration of the distinguished virtues and accomplishments of the royal originals.

We beseech the Supreme Ruler of the universe constantly to keep your Majesty and your Royal Consort in his holy protection, and to render the blessings of your administration as extensive as the objects of your Majesty's benevolent principles.

DONE at Annapolis in the State of Maryland this 16th day of April, 1784, by the United States in Congress assembled, your faithful Friends and Allies.

THOMAS MIFFLIN,²
President.

²Sparks, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, Vol. II, p. 183.

Appendix B

AT THIS VERY TIME, in the hour of victory, Washington wrote to Theodoric Bland, an old friend, a former colonel of the Virginia Line now serving in Congress, a letter which raises a question that has been put after all of our wars and which is frequently asked by the veterans of today. Writing from the camp at Newburgh on April 4, 1783, the Commander in Chief says:

We have now a national character to establish, and it is of the utmost importance to stamp favorable impressions upon it. Let Justice be one of its characteristics and Gratitude another. . . . I would not be understood to mean that Congress should (because I know they cannot, nor does the army expect it) pay the full arrearages due to them till Continental or State funds are established for the purpose.

Another thing, Sir (as I mean to be frank and free in my communications on this subject), I will not conceal from you—it is the invidious dissimilarity in the payments to men in civil and military life—the first receive everything, the others get nothing but bare subsistence—they ask what this is owing to? and reasons have been assigned, which they say amount to this—that men in civil life have stronger passions and better pretensions to indulge them, or less Virtue and regard to their country than we. Otherwise as we are all contending for the same prize, and equally interested in the attainment of it, why do we not bear the burden equally?

These and other comparisons which are unnecessary to enumerate, give a keener edge to their feelings and contribute not a little to sour their tempers.

As it is the first wish of my soul to see the War happily and Speedily terminated, and those who are now in arms return to citizenship with good dispositions, I think it a duty which I owe to candor and to friendship to point you to such things as my opportunity has given me reason to believe will have a tendency to harmony, and bring them to Pass.¹

GEORGE WASHINGTON

¹Bland papers, edited by Campbell, p. 101.

Appendix C

Writing to Colonel John Laurens, the new military envoy in Paris, under date of April 9, 1781, Washington puts the situation in a nutshell. He says:

If France delays a timely and powerful aid in the critical posture of our affairs it will avail us nothing should she attempt it hereafter. We are at this hour suspended in the Balance; not from choice but from hard and absolute necessity; and you may rely upon it as a fact that we cannot transport the provisions from the States in which they are assessed to the army, because we cannot pay the teamsters who will no longer work for Certificates. It is equally certain that our troops are fast approaching to Nakedness, and that we have nothing to clothe them with, that our hospitals are without medicines and our sick without nutriment except such as well man eat; and that our public works are at a Stand and the artificers disbanding.

But why need I run into detail, when it may be declared in a word, that we are at the end of our tether, and that now or never our deliverance must come.¹

¹Sparks, VIII, p. 5.

Appendix D

WE GIVE HERE the Camp Sites, occupied by the French Army on its way from Newport to Yorktown. It marched by regiments from Providence to Newtown, Connecticut, and thence by brigades. The dates refer to the encampments of the regiment, or of the brigade, to which Count William de Deux-Ponts belonged. The table does not differ materially from the route laid down by the Abbé Robin, in his *Nouveau Voyage*, pp. 222-24. According to his dates, the *abbé* must have accompanied the regiment of Soissonais.

June 10-18,	Providence.	Aug. 25,	Sufferns.
BY REGIMENTS.		" 26,	Pompton.
" 19,	Waterman's Tavern.	" 27, 28,	Hanover or Whippany.
" 20,	Plainfield.	" 29,	Bullions' Tavern.
" 21,	Windham.	" 30,	Somerset.
" 22,	Bolton.	" 31,	Princeton.
" 23-25,	Hartford.	Sept. 1,	Trenton.
" 26,	Farmington.	" 2,	Red Lion Tavern.
" 27,	Baron's Tavern.	" 3, 4,	Philadelphia.
" 28,	Break Neck.	" 5,	Chester.
" 29, 30,	Newtown.	" 6,	Wilmington.
BY BRIGADES.		" 7, 8,	Elkton.
July 1,	Ridgebury.	" 9,	near the Ferry over the
" 2,	Bedford.		Susquehanna.
" 3-5,	North Castle.	" 10,	Bush, Harford County.
" 6-20,	Phillipsburg.	" 11,	White Marsh.
" 21,	on the march.	" 12-15,	Baltimore.
" 22,	near King's Bridge.	" 16,	Spurrier's Tavern.
" 23 to Aug. 18,	Phillipsburg.	" 17,	Scott's Plantation.
Aug. 19,	near Alexander Lark's.	" 18-21,	Annapolis.
" 20,	Leguid's Tavern.	" 22-24,	on board ships.
" 21,	Hound's Tavern.	" 25,	near Hogs Ferry.
" 22, 23,	Verplanck's Point.	" 26, 27,	Williamsburg.
" 24,	Haverstraw.	" 28,	front of Yorktown.

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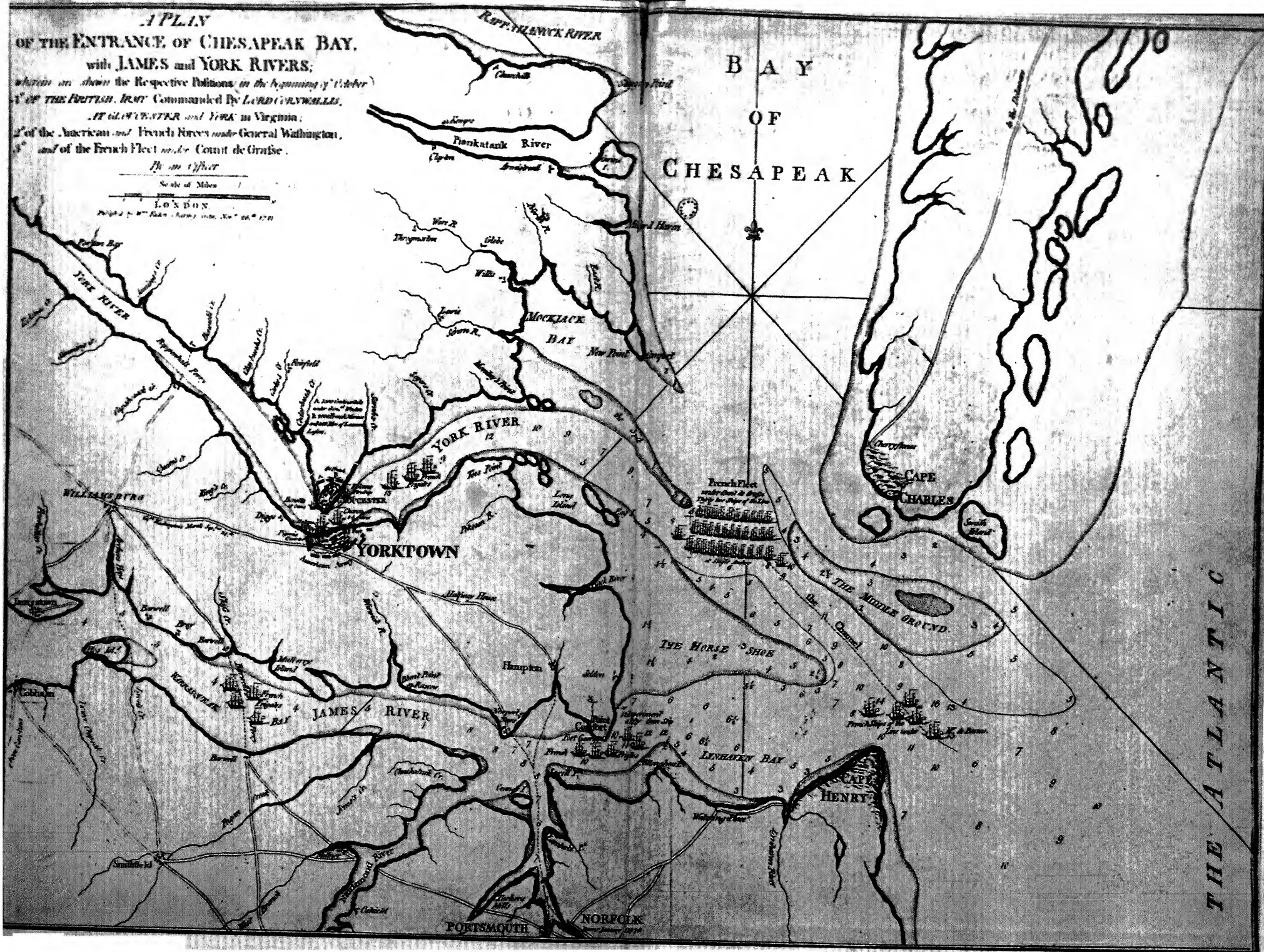
1st of THE BRITISH FLEET Commanded By LORD CORNWALLIS,
 at Old POINT and YORK in Virginia;
 2^d of the American and French Forces under General Washington,
 3^d and of the French Fleet under Count de Grasse.

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